

OURSELVES AND EMPIRE

By H. W. Foster and E. V. Bacon

WEALTH FOR WELFARE

OURSELVES
AND
EMPIRE

BY
H. W. FOSTER

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To

MY WIFE

*as some slight recognition of the inconvenience
caused by a husband who will spend his spare time
writing books*

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INTRODUCTION

MUCH has been written about Empire and its problems by experts for specialists and students. This little book is written by an ordinary man for ordinary men. It has been my good fortune to travel widely and to earn my living in the Colonies ever since the last war, and in fact I was living abroad until this war brought me home again. What I have to write will be a plain tale of the state of some of the Colonial territories, the greater part as I have seen them for myself, and of the things which need doing, together with suggestions as to how I think they might be done. Of course it is not possible to discuss the many problems exhaustively — all that can be attempted is a very slight sketch of certain aspects which do not seem to me to be sufficiently appreciated at present. Nor do I imagine that the methods I advocate provide the only possible solution to the manifold difficulties, they are simply my personal opinions — based on practical experience — of what I consider would be most helpful.

There is so much that we could do in the Empire, and indeed in the whole world, to help to provide a fuller, more satisfying existence for its peoples. What progress is made, how much actually is achieved, will largely depend on the interest which men in this country take in these things, and on the knowledge they acquire of them. There is far too little of either interest or knowledge at present. It is, I am told, a fact that at the mention of India or of Colonial affairs the House of Commons empties, for it is not on these things that the records of Governments and members are judged, these are not the things which mean votes. Until they do, our Empire will be neglected, not accorded the import-

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ance its opportunities and problems warrant. The reason is, of course, that people in this country do not realise sufficiently that it concerns them, that the prosperity of the backward peoples of the world means their own prosperity also.

But in addition it must be admitted that the problems seem so tremendous and so hard to understand, the recipes of the experts are so varied and often so conflicting, that the ordinary citizen feels completely bewildered and at a loss either to grasp the fundamental facts of the situation or to see any satisfactory remedy for much that seems wrong. A great deal of the support for what is loosely called freedom for the Colonies and for India comes from people who completely fail to see any solution to the difficulties and who are inclined to say "Well, let the Indian manage his own affairs, what concern is it of ours anyway?"

This is a mistaken notion. The welfare of India, indeed the welfare of the whole world, does concern us all very closely. It affects us in pocket and it affects our security and peace. Poverty and bad conditions breed unsettlement and lead to revolutions and wars. It is my very firm belief that stable peace can only be achieved by attacking human misery wherever it is found. The desires of people everywhere in final analysis are very like our own. They ask what we ask, reasonable conditions of life and hope for the future. It is only by giving the masses everywhere a vested interest in the continuance of peace that the advocates of violence can be deprived of their power and of the possibility of doing grievous harm to us all.

I am writing in the hope of explaining this by describing the countries and of making some of the problems seem real things affecting the lives of real people. If we can understand them and form some picture in our mind of what they are like, what their lives are like,

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then their difficulties become alive and real to us — we can take an intelligent interest in the things which need doing.

I do not intend to speak of the Dominions and of their affairs. They are independent nations and as such have their own proper contribution to make to the welfare of all. Moreover, having neither had experience of life in the Dominions, nor made them a special study, I do not feel competent to write of them.

It is only of certain limited aspects of the Indian situation that I wish to write, and I shall not deal at all with Constitutional problems and possibilities. East Africa, the region I know best, will be used as an example of difficulties which are also very pressing elsewhere. It may be that if methods for improving one country can be suggested, they may, with suitable variations, be applied to others where similar difficulties exist.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

POVERTY lies at the root of almost all the difficulties of the Colonies, and it is only by increasing the productivity of agriculture that this poverty can be relieved, for by agriculture the great majority of the Colonial peoples get their living. We all need to eat — most of us would like more food and better food than we can get today. In this country most of us work for wages, buy our food in shops, and live in great cities. In the Colonies there are few great cities and in most cases the people are directly dependent for their food on what they grow themselves. In India, while the industrial, city-dwelling population numbers many millions, more than three-fifths of the people consist nevertheless of cultivators and their families, while nearly nine-tenths live in India's 700,000 villages. It follows that in the economics of these countries, which simply means, in the way they earn their livelihood, wages are secondary, and it is the production of the peasant's plot which is the most important item. If then it is desired to raise the standard of living of the people, which is so deplorably low today, ways must be found to enable them to produce more from their land. It must be made to yield more food for themselves and their families and more food for sale to the towns, more raw materials for the factories and for export.

The prime importance of this question of increasing agricultural productivity has tended to be rather overlooked in recent years because of gluts and surpluses which existed in certain commodities. The problem of production is not solved. These surpluses of produce

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unsold and seemingly unwanted, only existed because of the poverty of those who would have liked to buy ; poverty in part deliberately induced by the Governments of the Dictator States so as to ensure the production of the means to war, and in part existing because the prospective buyers themselves produced too little to have a sufficient surplus to spend. Peace, and concerted measures to increase productivity *all round* and to enable a fruitful and equitable exchange and distribution of commodities, are the only means of reducing this poverty.

But this increased production needs guidance — the kind of produce needs selection, exact knowledge of the requirements of other lands. Primarily it should consist of foodstuffs which will be of the most value for consumption by the peasant and his family — for they require a better balanced diet as well as greater quantity. The surplus which he has for sale should, as far as possible, be of those goods which the world most needs, and which therefore, being in demand, will give him the best return for his expenditure of labour, time, material and land.

The food question is far from simple ; it involves quantity and quality and also variety, for native diets nearly always are very monotonous. They are the result of the habit and custom of centuries based on experience of what the land would best produce in the conditions of agricultural technique and of general knowledge when the customs began to be formed. To induce change an intimate knowledge is required of the ways and means of the people, of the characteristics both of them and of their land, and also research and experiment to determine the best methods for improvement in local circumstances. Then the new knowledge must be demonstrated and slowly become accepted by very conservative people, people, moreover, whose conservatism is founded on sound good sense — for when the total amounts produced are

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so small, there can be little room or inclination to make changes and try experiments which might bring disaster. When you and your family have only just enough produce from your plot to keep body and soul together for the year, it is very hard, and seems most imprudent, to take the risk of changing the methods which for centuries have just yielded that simple sufficiency. But the peasant cultivator is no fool, he is shrewd and hard-headed and is often quick to adopt a new idea, to take to a new technique, to try out for himself new crops and new seeds, when these have been tested and demonstrated in his district to be a success. He first wants, and rightly, to be sure that the new idea really works.

But often there are other factors besides conservatism and caution which hinder progress. Endemic diseases such as hookworm or malaria, which are extremely common, by causing continual ill-health deprive the sufferers of all energy and initiative. For their effective cure and for their prevention better housing and sanitation, more and better food as well as skilled medical attention, are absolutely necessary. Once more, knowledge is required, and the dissemination of this knowledge to the people by proper education.

This kind of work aiming at the relief of poverty demands careful study of all the factors involved. To increase the productivity of a poor and backward country needs the services of many branches of science and of the skilful and patient teacher. Improvement must be sought in all spheres at once, economic, social and political, and can only be sound if all are considered and tackled together.

There is of course nothing new in the idea of enhancing productivity all round in the interests of the consumer — that is to say, of everybody. The recent Hot Springs Conference was chiefly concerned with this very thing, and most particularly with the need for

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providing more and better food to eat for some 2000 million people who have not enough today.

"But the consumer is a sceptic by experience. Words and phrases, he knows, are at the disposal of politicians, and can have a whole dictionary of meanings. He has often heard of projects to put 'a chicken in every pot' and every time stayed hungry." ¹ What is now required is the translation of these ideas into practice in all countries of the world, and first of all in Britain and in the Empire. "It is not enough to pay lip-service to the good work and counsel of this Conference. Its vision of an efficient and fruitful world agriculture based upon the expansion of world production according to a functional division of tasks must also be accepted in specific terms." ²

There is nothing new in expansionist ideas, nothing new in schemes for organised production of more and better food to eat, but any dispassionate review of the past can only lead to the conclusion that a consistent national policy aiming at this would indeed be something new — at any rate in times of Peace !

There has been in recent years a great spate of criticism of Empire. In general this is to be welcomed, as it shows an awareness to the fact that Empire means responsibility and can only be justified if the rulers show careful concern for the welfare of the ruled. But critics should not stress solely the evils of the past or the miseries of the present. Much has indeed been done, and in general it would be fair to say that the government of our Empire has been in accord with, and often in advance of, the spirit of the times. But ideas of what government should attempt are apt to change rapidly and too much emphasis should not be laid on the faults of past administrators judged by the standards of today.

¹ *Economist*, leading article "A Hopeful Conference", June 12, 1943, p. 745.

² *Ibid.* p. 746.

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How Britain won the Empire is a matter for historians to decide. Whether our ancestors did right in acquiring it — whether their motives, which were many and various, can be called blameworthy we can leave for moralists and philosophers to discuss. These are academic points now. What is important today is that the Empire is fact. It exists, it works, it changes before our eyes. It consists of living people like ourselves, with human needs, desires and possibilities. Here they are, these people of India and the Colonies, nearly 500 millions of them, a quarter of the population of the earth, at every stage of human development from the lowest and most degraded savagery to some of the most highly educated and cultivated men on earth.

What are we going to do about them? What of the present and, above all, what of the future? This Empire—so varied, so interesting, so little known to our own people, so rich potentially, and actually in many parts so utterly poor — is our responsibility and our greatest opportunity. What shall we make of it? Shall it be a blessing to mankind or a curse? On the answer to these questions we shall be judged by history.

The question of the ownership and government of Colonies is receiving much attention everywhere at present and there are many in this country who believe that we have no right to them and should give them up — it may perhaps be asked “to whom”? To some international body as yet unformed and which might or might not rule better than ourselves? In this connection it should, I think, be remembered that we are not the only Power with Colonies and that what is demanded of one can reasonably be demanded of all.

In the past, many nations have pursued exclusive policies and have consistently tried to hinder foreign nationals from taking any part in the economic development of their Colonies. It was difficult for foreigners to

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reside, or even to visit in many cases. It may perhaps be hoped that a more liberal attitude in the Powers chiefly concerned may be looked for after the war, but at present it does not seem feasible to consider any form of international administration. So far as can be ascertained there is no desire amongst the populations concerned for any such change, and moreover, if Britain is willing to consider it, other Powers most certainly are not. The cession of territory is too closely associated in the public mind with national humiliation. Nor should it be necessary or even desirable that territory should change hands, or its administration be internationalised. Variety of method is certainly of value and no one nation alone has all the answers to the infinitely varied and difficult questions of Colonial administration. We should regard the different national methods as a series of controlled experiments in human advancement to which all can contribute and from which all can learn. The suggestion is also made that we should withdraw and hand the Colonies over to the inhabitants to govern themselves. This ignores their present poverty and weakness and would condemn them to a continuance of such poverty. In the present state of the world it is certain that were we to abandon the Colonial territories some other Power would occupy them which might be less interested in their welfare than in the plunder of the land.

Some suggest that all Colonies should be held under Mandate and that reports should be made annually to the Mandate Commission. To this suggestion there is less objection provided that it does not lessen the direct responsibility of Parliament for Colonial affairs. Personally I feel that the most important safeguard possible for the welfare of the Colonial peoples would be a really strong, active and well-informed public opinion in this country. There is no satisfactory substitute for this. People here should interest themselves in what is done

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and doing — should themselves demand reports of progress and insist that Government should act when things go wrong or when change is too slow. We should insist ourselves that our Empire must become a model of happiness, progress and prosperity for all the world to see. Why not do this job ourselves instead of trying to shuffle off the responsibility for vigilance and action on to an International Mandate Commission ?

In fact international bodies can only be of value in so far as they reflect the best opinion of the countries from whose nationals they are formed. Unless they are themselves infused with a spirit of inquiry and of desire for progress by the public opinion of the world, there is no hope in them. Thus we cannot escape responsibility in the last resort. In reality a Mandate Commission would increase our burden, as we should also be taking some of the responsibility for other peoples' Colonies as well as our own. We have great experience in Colonial management and have achieved much, and so today, in this as in other even greater things, the world looks to us for new ideas, for help and leadership in hard and troubled times. Let us find in this our interest and our opportunity, let us determine that, Mandate or no Mandate, our Empire at least shall be as well managed and as progressive a place as we can make it. Then, any reports to international authorities would be an advertisement of fine achievement, something of which we could be proud, and would by their example contribute immensely to the well-being of the whole world.

We may fairly claim that much has in fact been done ; that firm foundations of good and stable government have been laid. Law and order has been established and the justice of our Courts is the equal of any in existence today. A framework of road and rail communication has been built and financially the Colonies and India are in quite sound condition. Now what seems

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most wanted is positive constructive effort to improve the material condition of the inhabitants and help them to a fuller life. I believe that in the past our chief failure has lain in lack of such a consistent economic policy — indeed there has been no real development policy at all. Economic improvement is badly wanted, for only if people are healthy, reasonably prosperous and educated, can social and political progress be assured and constitutional changes stable. Only so can they have a fair chance to profit by their lives. Economic development may not be an end in itself but it certainly is a necessary means to any ends we know.

CHAPTER II

INDIA — THE PRESENT

IN the past it has been true to say that British government in India was popular — did not rest solely or even largely on force but was broad-based on the consent of the people. But for many years now discontent has clearly been growing, and, while it is still probably true that the great mass of the people consent and indeed support our rule — and only so could it endure — it is also a fact that this mass is politically quite ineffective and inert, while the confidence of the educated and politically minded minority has progressively waned. Whether the great majority of the people have any desire for change — or indeed whether they have any more faith in or desire for a Government composed of these educated Indians rather than of our own people — is a very disputable question and one not susceptible of proof.

The causes of our failure to keep the confidence of the educated Indian are many. They lie partly in the extreme difficulty which any ruling alien race must find in understanding a very different culture, particularly when the rulers are not “good mixers”. They lie no doubt partly in the character and education of the men sent out to govern and in the kind of society they made. Partly, too, they arise from the deliberate efforts made by the British Government to educate Indians in a philosophy of liberty and in democratic ideas. When these men, trained in our schools and colleges, speaking our language, reading our history and our literature, found themselves excluded from the realities of power in their own land, and even from social contact with the ruling race — not because they lacked knowledge or

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capacity, but solely because they were Indians — it was but natural for bitterness to grow. The influence, too, of certain strong personalities has played its part in the rapidly growing estrangement. But the discussion of causes and the precise allocation of blame — and it is certainly not all on the one side — must be regarded as an academic exercise. We should be chiefly concerned with the future — the past is only useful to us if it aids the understanding of the present and assists right action now.

The British Government have made a definite promise that India will be given freedom to settle her own government at the end of the war and Indians themselves must decide its form. This can only mean the complete severance of Indian administration from the control of Westminster, though it does not necessarily mean, as most Indian leaders themselves say, a complete change of administrative personnel and of all the fabric of government. But, for the future, Indian policy will be directed by Indians, they will have the ultimate responsibility and power, not Britain, and they must themselves take the decisions which will mould the conditions of life of their fellow countrymen.

The situation which will confront them will be neither simple nor entirely satisfactory. The basis of Indian life is still the village and the cultivator. The village remains today very much what it has been for forty centuries, too often a poor and dirty place of narrow lanes and crowded buildings, without sanitation, clean water supply or light. The houses are mostly made of local materials, sometimes stone, sometimes mud and wattle, sometimes sun-dried brick, usually plastered simply with mud, and with a dried mud floor. Windows there are usually none — for glass is scarce and expensive, while an unglazed opening merely allows free entrance to the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Part of the house is

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often shared with the cattle and other livestock. Furniture there is little save a bed made of a wooden frame laced with string, a few brass vessels and mud or rough pottery cooking pots; a kerosene lamp and some aluminium ware are often all that speak of change and modernity. The grindstone for the corn, some storage-bins for grain, a box to keep the gala clothes in, a mat or two and perhaps a few blankets would complete the equipment of the normal peasant's home. His clothing is scanty, and, though the climate does not necessitate as much as in Europe, it is rarely sufficient for his needs, nor does it allow of change. Often all that he possesses is a loin-cloth, a pair of sandals and a few yards of cotton cloth used as a kilt and also serving indifferently as a turban or a towel for his sweat.

The women are sometimes regarded simply as inferior drudges; their work will start before dawn grinding the corn for the day. They make the frugal morning meal, feed the cattle if there are any, and the children, sweep the house and help with the farm work unless restricted by *purdah* to the home. Over a great part of India the shortage of wood is such that the only fuel used is dried cakes of cow dung. The filthy task of making these also falls to the women.

The peasant's food is usually poor and monotonous, insufficient in quantity and almost always so in quality. In the Central Provinces and in Bengal the main meal consists of rice cooked with a pulse or some seasonable vegetable and is usually eaten in the evening after the day's work. A little rice will be left over from this and put to soak in water — this forms his next meal at midday. On festive occasions he will count himself fortunate if the ordinary fare can be supplemented with some fish or lumps of sweetened flour fried in oil. In Bengal curry is often used with the rice and is made of vegetable or fish if he is lucky. In the North of India and parts of

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the West and Centre fried or baked cakes of unleavened bread called chapatties take the place of the rice, and in some cases where the peasant is prosperous a little meat may be included in the diet.¹

Where cattle are kept milk is of course important but their numbers are quite insufficient to provide adequate supplies. The quality of the cattle, too, and the milk yield is very poor, though the milk is very rich in fat. The small farmer has too little land to provide grazing and fodder for many beasts, particularly in the dry weather when natural grazing on the common lands is non-existent. As the work of the fields is done by bullocks these must have preference over milking cattle for the scanty supplies which exist.

Such in the briefest outline are the conditions of life which confront the peasant cultivator, but these cultivators are the fortunate ones. They have some land. Even if rents are high or debts large they have their little farms and some slight security for the next meal. Far worse is the lot of the landless ones, the village labourers who have none or who have lost their lands through debt and foreclosure, and worse too the lot of the lower castes, the village servants who often still pursue their traditional callings and are usually paid in kind. Even in the good years all these are miserably poor and quite insufficiently fed, clothed and housed; in bad times chronic scarcity easily becomes actual famine.

Until lately, when war interrupted the normal course of trade and caused the recent famine in Bengal, the measures taken by the Indian Government to control famine have succeeded for nearly fifty years in averting any serious loss of life. Famine in the past was usually the result of a local crop failure caused by lack of rain or by flood, which could not be remedied owing to lack of the facilities to import food from elsewhere. Railways

¹ Vide *Sons of the Soil*, edited by W. Burns, Delhi, 1941.

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and roads and the immense irrigation works have enabled a reserve of food to be made available to deficit areas from those which had a surplus. But enormous as these works have been, they have not resulted in any great rise in the standard of living of the mass of the people. There is evidence that up to 1929 a steady rise in the productivity of India was taking place and an increase of purchasing power ; but then it seems progress was arrested and a decline has set in. For this world conditions are in part to blame ; the disastrous slump of 1930-33 caused distress to agriculturists everywhere. Political unsettlement in the world at large has also played its part. But there have also been factors peculiar to India. Industrialisation has contributed to the decay of the village artisan, who has been thrown back upon the land. The proportion of the total population of India dependent on agriculture has actually increased considerably in recent years despite the very large industrial development which has been taking place and which might have been expected to draw off people from the land.

But besides this proportional increase in the numbers of the agriculturists the total population also has been increasing by leaps and bounds. In 1921 it was found to be 319 millions, in 1931 353 millions, while in 1941 a further 50 millions had been added, making the total now over 400 millions. It would now appear to be increasing at the rate of some 6 million persons per annum. There is dispute amongst the experts as to the exact meaning of the population figures. They differ also as to whether there has or has not been some slight rise in the standards of living ; but one thing seems quite clear — this rise, if it has taken place, has not been sufficient on any criteria of judgment which we can apply. The net result of our policies has been to even out supply and demand and to avert actual famine, but constant want and insufficiency are almost universal.

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The whole vast population lives on a very small margin indeed above the level of distress. The effects of industrial development, of the introduction of better seeds and better methods to the farmer, of the railway and road system and of the irrigation works, have all been swallowed up by the prodigious rise in numbers. So great has been the pressure that from being an exporting country India has become a net food importer, and some 1 million tons of foodstuffs per annum are now required even to maintain the very low standards of consumption of today.

The essential fact of India today is her poverty. The cause of poverty is the low average productivity of the individual, and until this is raised, and greatly raised, no betterment is possible. Many factors need consideration and not the smallest is the normal outlook of the people.

Improvements cannot come unless the people want them and are prepared to work for them. Progress is an attitude of mind in the first instance. It is not an attitude of mind commonly found in the villages of India. Hinduism does not concern itself overmuch with conditions here on earth — its attitude is essentially “other-worldly” and the essence of its teaching that this world is simply illusion. There are other ideas also peculiar to the Hindu religious system which make economic progress difficult. The veneration of the cow to the extent that none may be killed — all must be allowed to die in their own good time — has meant that the scanty feed which exists is shared amongst a great number of utterly useless beasts which merely cumber the earth and give no service to their owners. In consequence, in the dry seasons the working bullocks suffer scarcity and the milking cattle often die. The useless wandering bull, moreover, undoes the good which the introduction of good breeding stock could bring. No selection of better beasts

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is possible until this attitude to the cattle can be changed.

Religion and social custom alike ordain early marriages, no small factor in the rise in numbers, and also make necessary a quite inordinate expenditure on wedding festivities. This expenditure is often the cause of debt though by no means the sole cause. The village money-lender is everywhere present, ready to oblige, and his rates of interest are not low. The moneylender is usually also a shopkeeper and dealer in produce, whose clients are kept bound to him by the terms of their debts. He not only acts as their banker but he sells them — on credit usually — what they need to buy, and buys from them in settlement of his credits the produce that they have to sell. When the peasantry are illiterate and poor such a system clearly offers the greatest advantages to the dealer. To help the farmer in his need for fairer prices and less expensive credit, Co-operative Societies, with Government backing, have been formed in many areas. They have had but limited success. They cannot afford to provide the peasant with the large sums usually needed to extinguish his existing debt, and the habits of self-help, thrift and mutual aid, which are needed for the success of such a movement, take long to form. Debt in India is not usually contracted for productive purposes but either for extravagance, festivities, jewellery, etc., or often simply to keep the peasant and his family alive in difficult times. Custom ordains that debt shall pass from father to son, and the parental mortgages of course come down with the tiny plots of land. Through the custom of dividing an inheritance equally between the heirs the farms have been divided and subdivided to such an extent that they are usually too small to yield a satisfactory livelihood.

In Bengal and Madras the average holding may be put at about 5 acres but in some of the more densely populated areas they are absurdly small. In a particular

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village surveyed in Gorakhpur the average holding comes to only 0.29 acre. Holdings, moreover, small though they are, are rarely contiguous, but comprise small plots scattered all over the villages, owing chiefly to the method of partitioning the holding. For instance a holding of 1.3 acres is divided into two parcels of 0.60 and 0.70 respectively, the latter being again divided into three fragments of 0.2, 0.2 and 0.3 acres respectively. In the recent Census Report we read "each heir invariably demands his share of each item of the property, his share in every kind of soil, of every well, tank, house, grass and pasture land, of roads and paths, and even of individual trees", and what is true of the United Provinces is also true of considerable parts of Bihar, Orissa, Bengal and Madras.¹

But in addition to the peasant proprietor there is a very large class of farmers who do not own the land themselves, but rent it from a landlord, who has come into possession sometimes by purchase, sometimes by foreclosure on a mortgage. There are also numbers, particularly in Bengal and Oudh, whose ancestors were given the land by the British in the early days of our rule. The Administration of the day which took over from the native rulers found men apparently in ownership of land who were really in a sense stewards or, perhaps more correctly, tax farmers for the Government. The British Administration did not clearly understand their function, endowed them with their lands, fixed the state rental or land tax in perpetuity, and believed it was continuing Indian custom and avoiding injustice to Indians through any confiscation of their lands. Rents now demanded from the cultivator bear very hardly upon his scanty profits while the State has no gain whatever from the rise in return from the land which has accrued.

¹ *Economic Problems of Modern India*, Mukerji. Macmillan, London, 1939, vol. i, p. 112.

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All these factors, in addition to the antiquated technique of agriculture, tend to perpetuate the poverty of India. They include some of the most deeply rooted social and religious customs of the land and as such are extremely hard for any Government to change. It is particularly difficult for an alien race, with a different religion and a vastly different outlook upon life, to attempt such changes without arousing the worst fears of a superstitious and ignorant populace. It immediately lays itself open to the charge of attacking all that the people hold most dear, an accusation which certainly would not fail to be made by those whose interests were likely to be adversely affected, however much the interests of the masses would really be served.

CHAPTER III

INDIA — WHAT COULD BE DONE

It would seem that by far the greatest problem facing any Government of India is that of improving the conditions of life of her "hungry millions". How can her poverty be relieved and the productivity of her people be increased? Policy must consider the production by agriculture of more food to be consumed and better-balanced diets, of more raw materials for export and for manufacture at home, and also of the materials required for her major industries and for new consumer industries which could efficiently and economically be established. It would be no small undertaking to supply the needs of more than 400 millions of people at any reasonable standard of living. These goods, the raw materials needed for production, and the foods the people need must be produced by India herself — or paid for, if imported, by other Indian produce. India's land and people must produce in one way or another, either directly or by exchange, what is needed to give the better living so badly required.

Broadly speaking, agricultural production can only be increased in two ways, by more intensive cultivation or by bringing more land into cultivation. The first means more manure, and more manures can only be of use if there is plenty of water for these to be transformed into food for the plants and absorbed by them. Rainfall is very erratic, and for the best results — indeed often for any results at all — to be obtained from manuring irrigation is needed to supplement the rainfall and as an insurance for the dry years. The manures which are now available to the Indian farmer are very limited —

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the best, as always, is animal manure, and that mixed with rotting vegetation made into a compost. The fuel shortage, however, which necessitates using dung for the fires is disastrous in limiting the supply of this manure. The social prejudice which prevents the Indian using night soil or a compost of this — a system which has been the mainstay of Chinese agriculture for generations — militates too against the improvement of his land. Artificial manures at present can only be of limited importance in India owing to their cost, and for these to become of more use much larger supplies at very much lower prices would have to be made available. Even so, it is usually humus which is the governing factor in soil deficiencies, and that can only be supplied from animal or vegetable manures.

The amount of new land available in India is probably not large ; the major irrigation schemes now working use up most of the available water. More wells could be made and would enable a certain increase in acreage and better use of existing land, but no really large-scale improvement in the situation can be hoped for from extension of the acreage in cultivation. The existing acreage must be better used and must yield more, that is the only answer.

Large-scale amelioration of village conditions demands an organised attack on the whole complex of causes, on ill-health, dirt, poor housing, ignorance and isolation, on social and religious custom and out-of-date technique all at the same time. “The peasant cannot be progress-minded in one direction and conservative and superstitious in another. No progress can be achieved if social custom, family and marriage habit encourage the peasants to multiply without restraint and outreach not merely the output of their fields but also the facilities of education and sanitation that may be provided. The advantages of co-operative credit are nullified if the peasant continues

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to waste money lavishly on social ceremonies in the sequence of births, marriages and deaths in the family or falls a victim along with his cattle to diseases, seasonally and recurrently, through disregard or ignorance of the elementary rules of hygiene. Neither intensive farming nor dairying can flourish as long as religious sentiment prevents the Indian peasant from taking a practical view of animal keeping.”¹ Each item is so closely connected to the other and they react on each other so intimately that, unless a comprehensive programme is put into action consistently over a long period of years, little result can be achieved. In the past many such programmes have been worked out and have been tried on a limited scale, and it has been shown that the Indian does react to such a betterment drive provided it is adequately demonstrated and financed and can be applied consistently. It is abundantly clear that many years, much money, much enthusiasm and hard work are required, but most particularly I think it necessary to stress the comprehensive programme wanted. It is of little use to attack technique alone — to introduce new ploughs and new pumps, new irrigation devices and so forth — unless you train artisans in their upkeep. It is of little use for the peasant to make more money when the landlord and the moneylender alone profit. The experience of some of the settlements on our new irrigation canals, where the peasants easily made large sums from their irrigated lands, only to spend it even faster on festivities and extravagance, and so to plunge even deeper into debt, is evidence of the need for education in the proper uses of prosperity. Social education must keep pace with economic advance and the people must so be helped to that fuller life that is the ultimate objective of policy. But equally no social or political advance

¹ *Economic Progress of Modern India*, Mukerji. Macmillan, 1939, Introduction, p. xvii.

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is possible on the foundation of utter poverty which exists today.

What then should be done? For the land to yield a decent living even for the population alive today would demand an immensely greater yield and the adoption of the most modern methods. The soil must be put into "good heart", which means that all the micro-organisms which play their part in fertility must be healthy and in abundant supply. Rotting vegetation and animal manure well ploughed in and with plenty of water are the answer. That means in turn the provision of fuel — the planting of trees, the introduction of charcoal and perhaps even electricity, but essentially trees wherever they can be grown — so that all available animal manures can be saved for the land. The provision of compost from city sewage could also be of service to near-by areas. The peasant must then be shown how to store his manure in pits so as to preserve its quality, and at the same time cleanse his villages. He needs better ploughs so as to improve cultivation, and he needs better bullocks to pull them and trained blacksmiths for their repair. Good bullocks need feeding and the provision of this food necessitates the regrassing of waste lands with drought-resistant profitable grasses and fewer, better beasts. He needs improved seeds and better varieties of his present crops while, in addition, new crops can be introduced of which now he knows nothing.

Water supply can take many forms, but the capacity of the soil itself to retain moisture is the most important point. This is primarily a function of its fertility; a poor soil which is always deficient in organic matter, "humus" as the farmer calls it, is not retentive of moisture and very liable to erosion which makes it poorer still. So far from there being any improvement at present in the soils of India, there is little doubt they are rapidly becoming poorer. Soil degradation is one of the most urgent pro-

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blems in the world today, and one far too little noted by people in this country. A city-dwelling population, out of personal touch with the land and living in a temperate climate, finds it hard to imagine that the soil, the very source of life for all the inhabitants of the world, is actually being destroyed over large areas of its surface. It is not too much to say that there is not a single country in the tropics or subtropical zone which is unaffected by this danger. It is, moreover, rapidly becoming more pressing owing in part to the steady increase in the world's population — to the demands for a higher standard of living and to the increasing pressure on the soil due to the demand for export crops to serve our modern industrial civilisation. In the future much more attention will have to be paid to the deterioration of the soils, the relationship between such soil degradation and diseases of plant, animal and man, and to the necessity for positive soil improvement before stable civilisation can be supported in security.

In India soil destruction takes many forms. Its most general, least noticed and most insidious and dangerous form is that of declining returns, usually attributed to drought or plant disease, and often combated, though not cured, by artificial manures and preventive measures against the disease which is itself but a symptom. These measures, of course, all have their place in farming technique, but it may be doubted whether a state of positive soil health can be ensured without increasing the organic matter in the soil. The land must be treated as a living organism, which in fact it is, and only if it is in full health can it grow good crops, feed healthy beasts and healthy men. The soil cannot be maintained in health — any more than can a man — solely on the products of a chemical factory.

Besides this slow decay there are other more spectacular forms of soil destruction. With the increase of

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population and the consequent increased demand for land, steep slopes have been cleared of bush and, without adequate terracing, have been brought under cultivation. They are, of course, very subject to erosion from the sudden storms so usual in tropical lands, and are quickly washed away. Infertile detritus is scattered over fertile lands below, gullies are enlarged, new ones are formed which eat back into the fields. Streams are choked with detritus and are raging torrents for a while when a storm falls in the hills ; but, owing to the removal of scrub and grass, as soon as the storm passes the water runs away and the stream soon ceases to run at all in the dry season.

The “run off” over the whole district is much quicker, the water table falls. Shallow wells cease to yield water and deeper ones have a lesser flow.

The destruction of scrub means also that less fuel is available and the village becomes completely dependent on dung cakes for its fires, while grazing too becomes more and more restricted. The pressure on what remains becomes greater and, as the grass over the smaller area available is eaten right down to the roots, it, too, finally dies. The soil is thus completely exposed to the sun, wind and rain and is soon utterly destroyed. Large areas of desert are thus being created.

This process of land destruction must be ended if there is to be hope of progress in India, and in its place there must be conservation and positive improvement. What then should be done ? The only way is very greatly to increase the yield from the land in cultivation, so that the steeper slopes and poorer soils can be taken out and rested. Some should be regrassed, some planted with trees. Incipient gullies need to be dammed, and the natural vegetation restored over all the damaged areas. Thus streams would be protected from the sudden inrush of flood waters and their flow become more regular. The whole cycle of decay and destruction needs to be

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reversed. The technique is known, there is nothing novel in the ideas. But the thing wants doing and so far it has hardly been begun.

But it is of little use improving technique, or showing the farmer what can be done, if his plot is too tiny for him to use the new ploughs and new methods ; also what incentive is there to progress when the plot is so infinitesimally small and split up ? Consolidation of holdings and improvement in the system of land tenure are certainly required. Perhaps in some areas blocks of land could be collectively farmed in the Russian methods, and certainly we should see to it that we know exactly what these are and how they can usefully be applied to the conditions of other lands. In some areas peasant holdings might be consolidated by voluntary methods but for widespread and rapid action the State in some way or other will have to intervene.

Consolidation of holdings is no use to the farmer if his load of debt is so great that the only gainer is the moneylender. The provision of credit on modern lines and of better methods of marketing and exchange will also necessitate strong State action. The Co-operative Societies have a part to play but without the help of Government the grip of the moneylender-merchant on Indian village life will never be broken.

But most important of all is the education of the peasant in the uses of money — the whole attitude of mind of man and woman needs sweeping change. The isolation of the village must be broken before this can be done, and every form of modern propaganda and publicity given its part to play. Primary education better adapted than hitherto to the needs of the children, the film, the fair, the wireless and the newspaper all can help. It is said that half the population of India have never yet been in a train, seen a newspaper or heard a wireless set. The provision of new interests and amusements could,

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if wisely directed, be of great use and could help considerably in reducing the expenditure on individual extravagances which now represent almost the only form of amusement the village knows. The abuses of modern amusements in our own land need not blind us to the great possibilities which they do possess.

Something too can be done to reduce the absolute dependence of the village upon the land. Village industries might be improved and used to supply many of the simpler needs of the people which small-scale industry could satisfy quite as well as by the giant production unit of the city. Modern industry has ruined the old village craftsman, but now apparently electricity enables many small producers to operate in a way similar to the pre-machine age.

The farmer on a tiny plot is often under-employed and, as Mr. Gandhi saw, his time is better used spinning and weaving his own clothes than doing nothing at all. Caste, which is to a certain extent function, might also be of use. The village water-carrier should be trained to supervise the village water supply — to service the new-style pumps, the Persian wheels and so forth so badly needed to supplement, and supplant where possible, less efficient indigenous devices. The village sweeper should become the village sanitary expert — the whole gamut of callings modernised, adapted to better, cleaner and more profitable ways. The productivity of the whole community would thus be increased.

In considering the ills of agricultural countries it is the fashion nowadays simply to prescribe industrialisation as the cure and as the only way of increasing wealth. This is not so ; it is not simply by people moving from agriculture into industry that standards of living can be raised, but by moving from less productive to more productive work of any kind. Agriculture when highly productive can support high standards of living. The

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example of New Zealand and Denmark and many other countries stands to witness. In India too there are many peoples with fertile soil, adequate land, good rainfall, etc., who maintain a high average of prosperity. It is the production which matters. There is no profit for the nation as a whole in people moving from unproductive agriculture into equally unproductive industry — that is, industry which can only be kept alive by subsidies and high tariffs to the ultimate cost and greater impoverishment of the consumer.

In India, however, there is much scope for industrial expansion. The coal reserves which India has are not very large in relation to the size of the country, but the hydro-electric power which could be developed is immense, second to no other country in the world ; yet development so far has only been on a small scale. A great increase is needed and could be the basis of industrial expansion of a kind which would avoid the formation of colossal aggregations in cities which were unavoidable so long as coal was the chief or sole provider of motive power. Electricity enables industry to be sited almost anywhere and obviates the need for excessive concentration, while improvements in transport consequent on the internal combustion engine also enable much greater freedom of choice of site. Industry can now much more easily be brought to the people — it is not necessary to bring the people to industry.

What is required, then, is a balanced scheme aiming at enhancing the productivity of the whole national economy. Better technique in agriculture, combined with health and educational advance, the whole based on an accurate scientific knowledge of the possibilities and requirements of land and people. Industrialisation based on the needs of the huge population and designed to supplement rather than compete with industries elsewhere, aiming at increasing real wealth for all by

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rational utilisation of unused resources.

For such a programme to be of service speed is necessary, and action on a scale we have not yet quite grasped. It is conceded by most that normal population checks do not operate except when the standard of living is rising fairly rapidly. It is clear that the population of India has grown by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum for the last twenty years. There is much dispute as to whether it will continue to increase at this rate, but in considering a policy aimed at raising living standards, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, the only prudent course is to allow for the continuance of the known trend. It would seem, therefore, that for any considerable benefit certainly to be felt by the people the production of India should be increased by at least 25 per cent in the next ten years — then there will be some benefit even if the population has risen in the meantime by another 15 per cent.

This is a tremendous undertaking and we may perhaps briefly consider some of the methods which have been advocated, and in fact tried, to help Indian productivity. One of the most striking attempts at improvement of village conditions was that of a particularly energetic and interested District Commissioner, Mr. Brayne, at Gurgaon. He found the district peculiarly backward and poor, the villagers indifferent and with no idea how to better themselves. He started an all-round campaign, trained Scout Troops and village Guides as agricultural advisers ; from his Indian helpers he got dispensers and nurses ; he organised fairs and film shows. For a time the scheme prospered, but it was expensive, and when the prime mover left the district the whole thing collapsed and the district rapidly went back to its old ways.¹

It must be recognised that for any impression to be

¹ *Remaking of Village India*, E. L. Brayne. Oxford Univ. Press, 1929.

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made on the problem something much more than individual effort and enthusiasm is required even in one district. In addition, continuity of policy and work over a considerable period of years is absolutely necessary, and, for every part of the large country to be adequately tackled, a veritable army of helpers is required. If this in practice is to need a great organisation on Civil Service lines, the cost will be prohibitive and will simply mean increased elaboration of an already elaborate and expensive Government system. To meet these difficulties it has been suggested that Indian youth should give a year's service in the cause of improvement instead of the other forms of National Service with which we are at present unfortunately more familiar. A comparatively small staff of experts would be needed to train the recruits and to direct the whole work.¹

Another suggestion has been made that the chief agency to be used for the desired village uplift should be the "panchayat" or local council elected by the village community. These councils are a very old feature in Indian social life and have certain judicial and administrative functions which they are peculiarly fitted to perform. If they could themselves be educated to recognise this necessity for advance and changed methods, they could exert a very powerful influence. They might be given legal powers to enforce their advice on certain matters, such as sanitation, anti-erosion methods, water supply and other matters, where individual negligence or backwardness has a bad effect on the rest of the community. But first they must themselves be filled with the enthusiasm to lead their people on to better things. They must know what can be done — and how it can be done.²

Each of these methods has its advantages and its

¹ *India and Democracy*, Schuster and Wint. Macmillan, 1941.

² *Economic Progress of Modern India*, Mukerji. Macmillan, 1939.

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disadvantages, but whatever be the means used it must be recognised that the objective is nothing less than a revolution in the life of the peoples of India. Nothing less can suffice to bring any effective relief to their poverty. Such a revolution can hardly be attempted by an alien power and needs the whole-hearted support of Indians for success. Even when we had the unlimited confidence of India's millions we scrupulously avoided interference with their established customs or their religions save where these offended gravely against humanity. Now that the confidence of many of the most intelligent Indians has been lost it would be completely impossible to attempt such a task. Indian agency is absolutely necessary and only Indians can do the work. Our part now can only be to show what is possible and to lead the way with imaginative policy aiming at the relief of distress in our own and in other lands. The best method of instruction — and by far the most persuasive — is by successful example. The Indian will not be slow to apply new ideas to the problems of his country once he sees they really work elsewhere. In the East as in all the world blind respect for custom is on the wane : " A new wind blows ".

In the rest of our Empire, in the Colonies and in the many States closely associated with us, there are other peoples as poor as or even poorer than the Indian — there are many other lands which need development. There we can demonstrate what can be done and how results can most quickly be achieved. Success in the Colonies of skilfully devised programmes for the development of unused resources in the interests of the inhabitants would be the very best advertisement for similar policies which could be applied by Indians to the advancement of their own folk.

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NOTE TO CHAPTER III

Since these chapters were written, a most interesting and very ambitious plan for the raising of the standard of living of the people of India has been published by a group of well-known Indian industrialists.¹ This plan presupposes a united India under an Indian National Government which would have the fullest support from the great mass of the people ; without their very active support rapid advance such as is envisaged would be quite out of the question. The politicians will therefore have to decide the form of government which will enable this national unity to be achieved before practical work on such a plan of action can be begun.

The habits of life of the people must be greatly affected, and that this plan will need for success very considerable pressure from the Central Government is quite clear. It is indeed stipulated, at least as far as finance is concerned, for we read that "practically every aspect of economic life will have to be so rigorously controlled by government that individual liberty and freedom of enterprise will suffer a temporary eclipse",² in order to avoid the dangers of an inflationary rise in prices. It is worth remembering that past experience has often shown how much easier it is for liberty to suffer eclipse than for it to be restored.

However, the comprehensive nature of the aims set out for the plan is certainly to be admired and the scale of financing would not seem at all unreasonable in view of the immense work it is proposed to undertake. It may perhaps be doubted whether the time allowed is anything like sufficient even taking into account the initial five years allotted for working out the details.

As has been pointed out in the preceding pages, any considerable increase in the productivity of Indian

¹ *A Brief Memorandum outlining a Plan of Economic Development for India*, by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, J. R. D. Tata, G. D. Birla, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Sir Shri Ram, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, A. D. Shroff and John Matthai. Penguin Books : Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. May 1944.

² *Ibid.* p. 45.

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agriculture demands several things which touch very intimately the social life and customs and the religious ideas of the people. The question of consolidation of holdings has been brought up in the plan and the suggestion is made that co-operative farming might provide a solution. It is recognised that "In order that co-operative farming should come into vogue as early as possible, some measure of compulsion appears desirable".¹ With this I should not disagree, but haste will mean corresponding increase in the pressure needed and it must be asked whether such rapid change will not provoke resistance. Can the inertia of the peasantry be overcome so quickly without violence? Perhaps it is pertinent to remember that the opposition of the peasantry to the introduction of collective farming in Russia cost the lives of some two million people. Is India prepared to pay the same price if need be?

So also it is quite clear that the Hindu attitude towards cattle must be radically changed before any considerable progress can be made towards the provision of better stock and more milk. Can the religious ideas which have existed for over three thousand years be so completely changed in twenty?

Even if successful in this, however, the problem of the use to which the peasant puts his money still remains. There is still the question of extravagance, festivities and debt. The whole problem is so tremendous, the mere numbers of people involved so huge, that I cannot but feel that the authors are right in the aims they set out, but over-optimistic to expect such big results so quickly. I should expect the programme of education and development generally would need to be continued over a much longer period and that therefore the total expenditure would be very much greater.

A total non-recurrent capital expenditure of £7500 millions is set out and recurrent expenditures of a capital nature of £891 millions over fifteen years. Can industrial production be multiplied by three and agricultural production increased by 130 per cent by an investment of

¹ *A Brief Memorandum outlining a Plan of Economic Development for India*, p. 30.

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about £1 : 3s. per head annually, a total capital investment over fifteen years of £17 per head of the population? The sum would seem too small, and it may indeed be doubted whether the agricultural productivity of India can actually be increased so greatly whatever the expenditure.

Still, it is most important and of good augury that Indians themselves are thinking in such concrete constructive terms of the economic problems of their country. While difficulties and dangers can be noted, these must not be allowed to make our attitude to such a scheme purely a negative one. These are hopeful things for India. The proposers themselves do not regard their plan as more than a first sketch of what might be done. As such it certainly should be welcomed, and provides much material for thought and for further constructive efforts from all concerned in India's welfare.

CHAPTER IV

CENTRAL EAST AFRICA — AS IT IS TODAY

KENYA, Uganda and Tanganyika present a great variety of climate, scenery and circumstance. As they lie on or close to the Equator the climate of any part of these countries is governed by its altitude and by the degree of its exposure to the rain-bearing wind currents, some of which come from the Indian Ocean and some from the South Atlantic. The whole of Central Africa is a raised plateau mostly over 4000 feet in height and rising to over 18,000 in the snow-capped Ruwenzori and the great volcanic cones of Kilimanjaro and Kenya.

The low-lying wet coast of Southern Tanganyika is hot, steamy and luxuriant, with tropical vegetation and immense mangrove swamps near the mouths of the rivers. Northwards, with decreasing rainfall, this gradually changes to more open country with sandy beaches, and often high cliffs clad with palms behind them. Mombasa is in this zone. A first-class, well-equipped port, before this war the biggest on the eastern coast of Africa north of Beira, it has since been greatly improved for military needs. The railway to the interior starts to climb almost as soon as it leaves the island on which Mombasa stands, and as soon as the coastal strip is left behind enters a belt of barren land some 200 miles wide where steppe and semi-desert mingle. This country is a wilderness of rock and sand, of scrub and thorn and red infertile soil, save where rivers crossing it from far-off mountains bring some fertility with their waters, or a few hills gather a little more rain in their immediate vicinity.

Slowly the railway climbs until this desolate barren "Nyika" gives way to open grassy plains, the home of

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countless antelope, and eventually, 350 miles from the sea, Nairobi, the capital of Kenya Colony, is reached. This marks the beginning of the true Highlands which occupy the south-west quarter of the Colony. Mostly fertile and reasonably well watered, they have a delightful climate rather resembling that of England in mid-summer. It is here that most of the European farms are to be found and also the homes of many of the African tribes, amongst whose lands the blocks of European-owned farms are interspersed. Nandi, Lumbwa, Kikuyu, Algeyo and Marrakwet all have big areas in this pleasant highland country.

Nairobi is the business centre of this part of Africa and is a busy and growing town, with large modern hotels and excellent shops and other facilities and amenities. From here the railway rises steadily on its way to the west, past the coffee farms near Nairobi, then through the native reserves, past the clusters of round mud huts each with its plot of cultivation and its cattle, sheep and goats, usually guarded by a tiny boy. Eventually the great trench of the Rift Valley is reached, here some 3000 feet deep and sixty miles wide : a magnificent scene, lakes blue in the distance, the country grey, the colour of the volcanic ash of which the soil is formed ; the serried grey cones of the volcanoes and a green thread or two where a stream winds its way. In the Valley there is great variety of soil and of rainfall. Much of the land is very light, being only volcanic ash, and has insufficient rain for arable farming to be a success. Here sheep and cattle form the chief standby of the farmer. On the western flank of the Rift maize and other crops are grown, while as the land rises to the lofty ranges of the Mau wheat begins to appear. Passing over the summit at the highest station on any railway in the Empire the line descends rapidly to the rolling grassy plains of the Uasin Gishu. In the distance is the great blue cone of

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Mount Elgon, another extinct volcano, while the land in between is dotted with the farms and homesteads of the settler community. The settlers are in part of Boer extraction and migrated here after the South African war. They found in these empty plains, then swarming with game, conditions which reminded them of their distant veldt and here they stayed. In part the settlers are ex-soldiers who came after the last war to take up farms from Government.

From Eldoret, the district centre, the line drops rapidly and, running close to the newly found Kakamega goldfields, passes over the border into Uganda. The climate has changed and the heat is much greater, for here the land is only some 4000 feet above sea-level. This is no longer a country of maize and wheat, of cattle and sheep, but the land of cotton and of the banana ; a fertile, fortunate land of high rainfall and rich soil. In Uganda cotton has enabled very considerable progress in native betterment to be made ; the ease with which the crop can be grown, its good yield and high prices at the end of the last war, established the industry in the favour both of the native and of the Government, which derives its chief revenue from the cotton tax. The ease with which motor roads can be built in Uganda owing to the presence of good material in the form of a kind of lateritic ironstone under the surface almost everywhere has greatly helped the development of the country. The ginning and marketing of the cotton crop is chiefly in the hands of Indians, who also run the majority of the motor transport, though here the Buganda is rapidly taking a hand himself.

The change in native circumstances has been great and rapid, as an example may show. " On the Eastern borders of Uganda, on the slopes of Mount Elgon, there lives a tribe called the Wagishu. In 1919 they were absolutely uncivilised, their country quite undeveloped.

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Roads or railways did not exist and all transport was by head portage to Lake Victoria. There was virtually no trade. The people lived in filthy huts, the men clothed in untanned skins, smelly and covered with lice, the women usually in a grass kirtle round the waist. A primitive subsistence agriculture provided them with their food, always insufficient, and, whenever the harvest was less than normal, serious privation if not actual starvation resulted.

“After the last war, uninhabited lands in Kenya Colony on the borders were thrown open to soldier settlers, and active development was started. A railway was under construction which reached the European area in 1925, and was then immediately pushed on through the Wagishu country to the centre of Uganda. Branch lines were built, roads were constructed, and today there is an excellent system of all-weather roads which bring all parts of the country within easy reach of rail.

“The men of the Wagishu started to go out to work, and provided large numbers of labourers for the European farmers and for the railway and road construction. The Wagishu thus for the first time came into close contact with civilisation and its ways. The first change that we noticed was a tendency to abandon the skin for a disused gunny bag worn as a smock, with holes cut in the bottom and sides for the head and arms. Next, they began to buy lengths of unbleached cotton cloth (usually Japanese manufacture — though universally known as ‘Americani’), or a cheap blanket draped over the shoulders and around the body from a knot. Cheap ‘Americani’ shirts and shorts were soon being manufactured by Indian tailors which sold at from one shilling upwards. These were also being imported in large quantities for the use of other tribes who had started sooner in the race for clothing. The women had now begun to wear one-piece cotton smocks.

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“ While this was going on, the Uganda Government was very actively encouraging the native to grow more foodstuffs for himself — for instance, extending the cultivation of bananas to their territory ; cotton was introduced as a cash crop, and later coffee, for which this country seems specially suited. Markets were opened, schools and medical services were being extended, and agricultural demonstration plots were started at many of the village headquarters. The Wagishu were thus not only earning money in Kenya, where they would usually work for a few months and then return home, but they were developing their own production on their own lands. While the men were away at work earning wages, the cultivation was carried on by the women, the old men and the children, and today, after twenty years have passed, the changes have been immense. There are two considerable towns, railway stations, garages, shops, hotels, an aerodrome, all the appurtenances of civilisation can be seen.”¹

Having passed the Wagishu country the railway runs on into the heart of Uganda and at Jinja reaches Lake Victoria. Here, crossing the White Nile by a road and rail bridge within sight of Ripon Falls, the river's source, it goes on for another fifty miles through the Kingdom of Uganda to Kampala, the business centre and at present the terminus of the line.

The life of this part of Central Africa centres around Lake Victoria. This great sheet of water, bigger than Ireland, on which large steamers ply regularly, was formerly the sole means of communication and of transport for the trade of Uganda. Jinja is a pleasant spot with grassy lawns and golf links sloping down to the lake, and the heat is usually tempered by a soft breeze from the water. It would seem to have a key position

¹ *Wealth for Welfare*, H. W. Foster and E. V. Bacon. Macmillan, London, 1943, p. 8.

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in the development of this part of Africa. The falls could generate very great electric power and already work a pumping station for the township water supply. But Jinja has also the advantage of being a focal point to which all roads lead, for here is the only bridge across the Nile in the country. It has lake transport by dhow and steamer and also rail and air communication, and is the centre of a rich and very densely populated cotton-growing area. It seems to be ideally situated as a centre of industrial development in the future.

From Kampala, the business capital of Uganda, roads pass north to Lake Albert and then connection is made by steamer across the lake, with the Belgian Congo and its rich gold mines of Kilo and Moto. There is considerable mineral wealth in Uganda also ; gold has recently been found and tin has been known and worked since 1925 ; while copper and many rarer metals have also been discovered. The country is by no means yet fully explored, particularly in the West and South where the land rises to some of the most beautiful scenery in this part of Africa. Grassy uplands alternate with patches of forest and many lakes, while on the border of the Congo there rises the great massif of Ruwenzori — the Mountains of the Moon.

Rather a sombre and forbidding range, the lower slopes bare and grassy, then masses of forest and, above all, the snow and the gleam of glaciers showing occasionally in the early morning when the clouds, which usually enshroud them, break for a moment in the sun.

The southern half of Lake Victoria is in Tanganyika Territory. The West, Bukoba Province, is a grassy, green and fertile country growing coffee, cattle and bananas. The natives are prosperous and the native governments are well organised under their Sultans. The country is very well watered and fairly healthy with a sandy soil. The pleasant climate, grassy landscape and high white

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cliffs rising from a blue lake studded with islands, make a most attractive contrast to Musoma on the eastern shore. Here the land along the lake is mostly low-lying and infested with the tsetse fly which carries sleeping sickness to man and is also fatal to cattle and horses. Generally speaking, the soil is much less fertile and the population scanty and much poorer. Some small gold mines have been found, but nothing so far of any great size.

To the north of Musoma we come back to Kenya Colony again, the country of the Kavirondo, who grow quite a considerable amount of cotton and also provide some of the strongest and most reliable workers for the farms and mines. A cheerful, good-humoured race, thrifty, industrious and quick to learn, they are progress-minded, and a good future certainly awaits them, not only from the development of their own land but also from the prominent part they should take in the general development of this part of Africa.

Kisumu, the chief town, was for long the lake port for Uganda and terminus of the railway before the extension over the Uasin Gishu was built. A busy flourishing township, it supplies the needs of the growing native market and also the gold-mining area round Kakamega to the North and the gold and copper mines near the Tanganyika border to the South. It is important also as an air junction, has a very big aerodrome for land planes, and in addition the great flying boats of Imperial Airways came in here to rest.

The variety of Africa is amazing. In parts it is thronged with a dense and thriving native population and in parts, seemingly with equal opportunity, the land is empty save for wild animals. Some parts have good grass and swarm with cattle and sheep of the pastoral tribes ; not far away are great areas untenanted save by the tsetse, that destroyer of man and beast. Uganda is a country where

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cotton is king — the whole economic life of the country revolves around this crop, which has brought great prosperity to the native growers. Tanganyika is in some parts almost as prosperous as Uganda, but over big areas it is a dry, harsh and forbidding land. Kenya has rich native areas too, as densely populated as any part of Africa — but much is only very thinly peopled, and in its present state the Colony does not seem to provide the good living for its population which its size, climate and natural resources would lead one to expect. Kenya has been a disappointment for many and presents one of the most awkward problems in the Empire. Here we have a group of Europeans who own some 7 million acres in the heart of this African land. It is often asserted that they own almost all of the fertile land which has adequate rainfall. This is not true. Nor is it true to say that all the Kenya natives have insufficient land for their needs. Actually the situation of different tribes varies enormously — some have ample, some have less; in all cases with better management the land could yield much more than it does today. The real problem of Kenya is not the quantity of land so much as the way the land is used.

The population of Kakamega District in North Kavirondo is one of the most dense in the Colony. These people live in a very fertile district of high rainfall, and they have lost practically no land to European farmers and only a very small acreage for mining leases. Their future depends on increasing the yield of an already fertile soil and in providing industrial outlets for overcrowding. Being surrounded by other native tribes, no more lands can be made available to them, and so far they have not shown much inclination to emigrate or to go out to work as do their neighbours from South Kavirondo. Indeed the mines in Kakamega are staffed very largely, not from the dense population on their doorstep,

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but from other tribes who have come into this area to look for regular work. The Luo tribes of South Kavirondo are energetic and are prospering, as has already been mentioned. Population is very dense in certain parts, but their adaptability and initiative is making them amongst the most highly valued workers of this part of Africa. At the docks at Mombasa, on the railway everywhere, on the plantation and the mines, on the native cotton "Shambas" in Uganda, in the markets as small traders, driving lorries, in the ginneries, wherever there is work to be done they are to be found. In this western part of Kenya many tribes, for example the Nandi, Lumbwa, Kisii, Algeyo and Marrakwet, have very considerable areas of fertile land at their disposal. This could everywhere be made to yield vastly more produce than it does today; greater variety of crops and better seeds, better methods, better and fewer beasts, health and education, all are as much required here as they are elsewhere.

The real problem of native lands consists in the two groups of whom the Kikuyu are prominent in one and the Wakamba, Suk, Kamasia typical of the other. These latter peoples are all cattle-owning tribes and the chief cause of their undoubted distress today is faulty land utilisation in the past and native custom which perpetuates this now.

"A brief and, therefore, only partly exact survey of the history of some of the native lands may not be without interest. When British rule was established, and the development of the country started in earnest in the beginning of this century, the pastoral tribes were suffering considerable hardship from the epidemic diseases which ravaged their herds at frequent intervals. The Government set to work to find remedies and to inoculate the beasts against rinderpest, pleuro-pneumonia, etc. These have been very successful, and the great epidemics

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have become things of the past. The herds of cattle multiplied and grew fat. The flocks of sheep and goats grew faster still. The native no longer lost his beasts to raiders, and was content to watch his herds grow steadily. Agricultural tribes became pastoral as the easier form of existence, and these flocks and herds were not recognised by the native simply as his means of livelihood, his sustenance, but even more as his outward and visible sign of wealth, at once his investments and his jewels. It has been very truly said that the East African is still 'on the goat standard'.

"All, therefore, should have been well, but no attempt was made to ascertain scientifically the carrying power of the land. The herds have so multiplied, or — in other words — the Government's policy has been so successful, that the delicate balance of nature has been completely destroyed by over-grazing. The grass cover has gone over very large areas, and the soil itself is now being swept away by wind and rain. Famine once more stares the native in the face." ¹

The Kikuyu is a different problem. His land is densely populated and he has lost considerable areas to European occupation. He is surrounded by these and by other native tribes and additional land now would be impossible to find. What he has, however, is extremely fertile, amongst the best in the whole country, and can certainly be made to yield much more than it does at present. Were the lands of Africa, particularly in such favoured areas as this, treated with the care, the labour and attention which a South European peasant lavishes on his tiny plot, what could they not yield? When one thinks of the work involved in carrying every bit of soil to the tiny terrace fields of Sicily and Italy and of how every nook and cranny amongst the rocks on the mountain-

¹ *Wealth for Welfare*, H. W. Foster and E. V. Bacon. Macmillan, London, 1943, p. 84.

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sides is tended and made to yield something, one realises what such care could yield here, where the native has at his disposal some of the richest land in Africa.

But, while it is true to say that much can be done for the Kikuyu by promoting better and more intensive cultivation of their land and by the provision of alternative occupations, at present they are certainly a tight fit and will probably long remain so.

CHAPTER V

CENTRAL EAST AFRICA — WHAT COULD BE DONE

OVER most of East Africa the observer cannot but be struck with the poverty of the population and the seeming emptiness of the land. Yet this immensity of good land vacant only awaiting the hand of man is more apparent than real ; over vast areas the soil is extremely poor ; over equally vast areas the rainfall is too erratic for successful cultivation, while over more still the tsetse holds complete sway. Africa is not an empty continent teeming with riches awaiting only the cultivator ; save for comparatively small areas of favoured country, Africa is a hard land and poor, yielding fruits only to constant toil and unremitting care. In general it is fair to say that the African is backward and poor not only from isolation, from sloth and ignorance, though all these play their part, but also from the inherent poverty of his harsh environment. Africa can be made to yield great wealth in agricultural production as in mining and industry, but she will exact all that science, organisation and knowledge can give — and in addition, before she is tamed, will demand the expenditure of very large sums of capital.

The first necessity and the most obvious is the need of team-work between scientists to study the problems of soil, of health of man and beast, of tsetse and locust control, and of means of technical development. But it is no use working out ideal systems of soil improvement unless they can be adapted to the needs of the native, and explained to him, and unless he can be persuaded to adopt the new methods. The work of the anthropologist to study native custom and suggest its possibilities and to enable

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the Government to understand native ways of thought, must key in with that of doctor, agricultural scientist and economist for the best results to be attained. If the health and energy of the native are to be promoted, better housing, clothing, diet, sanitation and so forth are primary necessities. It is not only a stinking skin the native abandons when he adopts cotton clothing — it is the lice which infest it. Khaki shorts can be kept clean, an untanned goat-skin cannot. For adequate progress to be made his productivity must be increased, his stock of health, knowledge and capital equipment multiplied. The productivity of land and people can only be assured by a comprehensive programme which envisages the help of science at every point and which aims at improvement of native conditions in every detail of their physical, mental and social environment. The complete study necessary for drawing up any orderly scheme for the full development of African resources has never yet been attempted.

There are many difficulties and complications in East Africa besides those of nature. Race friction, race hatred even, exists in many parts of the Empire, but here it is peculiarly difficult as three races are concerned : the African, the Indian and the European. Here too it can be said quite definitely that the cause of racial trouble is fear. At the bottom of this problem wherever it exists we find fear. In South Africa and Rhodesia there is fear, that of the white miner who is afraid his job may be taken by the native, that of the native who sees his lands already in large part taken from him and fears for the remainder. In Palestine the former High Commissioner, General Sir Arthur Wauchope, recently wrote that what divided Arabs and Jews was not so much differences of religion and civilisation as fear — “ The fear of the Jews that they may be driven into the sea, and the much more acute and widespread fear of the

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Arabs that they or their children may be driven into the desert".¹

In East Africa also fear is at the root of the problem. The African fears for his lands. The native of Uganda and of Tanganyika is afraid that he may be subjected to the rule of the Kenya settlers and, dreading the extension of their influence, he opposes any scheme of closer union between the territories, however advantageous that might be on administrative or economic grounds. The Indian is afraid of the increasing competition of the African in trading and commerce, and as clerk and artisan. He sees his compatriots excluded from other parts of our Empire because they are Indians and he fears for his position in this land too, for the development of which, he has done so much. The white man, the settler in Kenya or in Tanganyika, fears for his land and feels his position insecure, while in trading the Indian competition is very keen. The three communities have come to regard each other's welfare as in some degree mutually exclusive — and this attitude has been much reinforced by unjustified attacks and exaggerations made on one community or the other from prejudiced circles in this country. The prime necessity is to find ways whereby all races can come to regard their own welfare as bound up in that of the others and in the general prosperity and wise development of the whole region. Fear is at the bottom of the difficulties and must be eliminated before race hatred can die. In East Africa as elsewhere, so long as people of whatever colour or race feel themselves insecure, their economic interests in grave danger from the competition of another race, so long will they be bitter and harsh.

There can be no quick or easy remedy. No legislation alone can remove such fear. Nothing but long-term policy aimed at building up the resources of the country,

¹ *The Times*, Special Correspondent's article, Saturday, Dec. 4, 1943.

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and by giving each race so much to do, such great opportunities for the exercise of their talents and their skill, that gradually fear will die and each can find his place in the building of the land. But for this ever to be possible there must be no artificial hindrance to a man's making full use of the opportunities which lie before him just because of his race or colour. If each race is to give of its best, each must feel it has full opportunity to work unhampered by any artificial restriction. Simply the man must count — what he is worth — what he can do — not the colour of his skin.

In Kenya, while the black man fears for his lands and the Indian for his commercial future, the white man is afraid of the failure of the white settlement policy. It must be admitted that economically the success of the settlers has been very uneven. The country is a young one and has experienced all the difficulties of a pioneer stage of development. War and slump have upset price relationships here as all over the world. Many who came had too little capital to stand the losses unavoidable in a new country where everything has to be learnt and where many unrealised difficulties lie before the newcomer. But by now it can be said that in good districts where soil and rainfall are suitable, and where management has been good and capitalisation adequate, the coffee grower has become well established. The tea and sisal industries also, both of which require a very considerable investment, and have to be managed on plantation lines, are reasonably successful and secure. The farming community which relies on maize, wheat and mixed farm products seems to be much less sound economically, and indeed it is very doubtful if it could have survived at all but for the assistance given by Government in the form of loans, railway rebates on produce for export, tariffs and other subsidies open or veiled. It is where they depend on export markets for

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bulk products such as maize that they seem to be least sound. The quantity of produce is never likely to be a large one and a considerable factor in world markets, and so command its own price. They have to face a long and expensive haul to the coast, as the majority of the maize comes from the districts with the longest haul. In addition they are far from their markets in Europe and the high cost of carriage through the Suez Canal operates against them.

Where the farmer grows special products such as pyrethrum, and where he feeds the local market, he would seem to be economically much sounder. It may indeed be said that his future lies chiefly in the quality of his produce and in the expansion and improvement of local demand. The first need of the European in Africa is to make the white settlement policy a success economically and to make the farmers financially secure. They should be secure and successful too on their own merits, on the returns from their good farming and enterprise, not by political influence nor by virtue of subsidy and tariff. It seems to me that nothing but a greatly enlarged local market can provide them with this security ; and for this reason I believe their success is completely bound up with the productivity and wealth of the African and Indian communities. As African trade grows and the African finds new wants and rising standards, so the commercial community, both Indian and European, grows, and more and more high-class European farm produce can be sold.

There is in East Africa an almost unlimited field for organised development in agriculture, in mining and in industry. The country has hardly been scratched as yet and does not produce a tithe of its capacity. In addition development has been unorganised, almost solely guided by the flair or enthusiasm of the individual — the development of the pioneer. Now something different is required.

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The whole region ought to be considered and its possibilities and needs reviewed in the light of world requirements, then a balanced scheme of development can be prepared. Primarily, as elsewhere, the wealth of the people can only be increased by enabling them to produce more, and again all the factors which hinder such increased productivity need treatment at the same time. In Africa there are unusual difficulties before the farmers in the shape of animal and plant disease, tsetse fly and locust, besides the ordinary risks and dangers of soil deterioration, erosion and drought. The tsetse can be eliminated by the cutting down of bush where he lives, and where the population is dense and settled this is not difficult, but where it is scanty and shifting the problem is insoluble. Locust control needs international action on a continental, if not a world, scale. The needs of the African farmer are not very different from those of the Indian : a better technique, better crops, variety, better seeds, better and fewer beasts, health and education, housing and sanitation, these are ordinary requirements. The regrassing and treatment of badly eroded land is a specially pressing problem in Kenya and is becoming urgent in Tanganyika and parts of Uganda also. Water supply for man and beast needs improvement.

There are also possibilities in Kenya of considerable irrigation schemes but before anything can be said with certainty about them a complete and accurate survey is needed.

The mineral possibilities are great all over East Africa. Several good gold mines have been found and are in steady and profitable production. Copper too looks as though it may become of major importance. But it is in the industrial development of Africa that the greatest future would appear to lie. Mombasa and Nairobi have already some industries established serving the needs of the local communities, but Uganda seems to have very

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great possibilities in this direction. As already pointed out,¹ Jinja is a key point in the communications of the region and has immense hydro-electric power available for development. Could not a start be made and a trading estate built up here with model housing, industrial buildings and power available to the enterprising industrialist? Cotton would seem an obvious manufacture to start. Boots and shoes could be made from local hides. Glass, pottery, soap, tobacco, processed foods, etc., might follow; while, if the copper mines live up to the expectations now being formed of them, a refinery might be needed.

The projects for control of the Nile at Lake Albert would need new railway construction and demand immense quantities of cement. Good limestone exists at Tororo on the railway and only 30 miles from Lake Victoria. Coal is known at Ufipa near Lake Tanganyika and could possibly be brought at a reasonable figure to the spot. The transport of Africa depends on oil and coal (as elsewhere) and these at present have all to be imported. The development of the heart of Africa would be greatly helped if such sources of power could be opened up in the continent itself and the cost of importation and the long haul into the interior be avoided.

But, for such a scheme of development of the region to be possible, first of all full knowledge of its potentialities is required. This is not available at present. Survey both topographical and geological is incomplete. The population statistics are most uncertain. No survey of industrial possibilities has ever been made. But it is from a balanced industrial and agricultural development that most is to be hoped; a development which studied the native market and the raw materials available and brought to the spot the necessary industrial equipment for manufacture, which, moreover, could plan communica-

¹ *Vide* pp. 37, 38.

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tions in the light of full knowledge of the country's potentialities and of those requirements of the rest of the world which it could best supply.

The exports of Europe and America would, of course, derive very great benefit from industrial development in these backward countries. The standard of living of their inhabitants would rise rapidly — their needs grow. A rich customer is better than a poor customer. Nor need the competition of the young industries be feared, for common-sense policy would encourage the more simple industries in these countries while the older industrialised nations should more and more concentrate their efforts on new products, on higher-priced goods requiring great skill, the highest quality of raw materials, and large capital investment, and on the production of capital goods.

The exporting countries should, in their own interests, encourage selective industrialisation in the agricultural countries. Industries which cater for people with a low standard of living making the cheapest goods, should properly be sited in the countries which consume these goods and produce their own raw materials. Once established these industries contribute materially to raising internal purchasing power, and thereby gradually increase the demand for better-quality goods at a higher price which can be manufactured most efficiently in countries like Britain and America with old-established industrial systems catering for world-wide markets. What is required, however, is the organisation of the production of the raw materials required for the new industries and the encouragement of the farmer to produce for export those raw materials and semi-manufactures required by America and Britain in payment for capital investments made.

CHAPTER VI

NORTH-EAST AFRICA — AS IT IS

OUR responsibilities are not bounded by the territories "red on the map". There are other areas, either under our protection, or whose interests are so closely inter-mixed with our own or with those of our Colonies and Dominions, that there can be no future for them if they are considered as completely independent entities ; only by the closest co-operation of all can all alike prosper. Moreover, some of our own Colonies cannot be developed save in conjunction with adjacent areas with which they are naturally united, though divided politically.

Few regions of this troubled world present more interesting problems than the north-eastern horn of Africa, and few offer a more promising field for experiment or greater need for new methods. It is a well-defined geographical region, an area roughly one thousand miles square, bounded North and East by the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, on the South and West by the deserts of North Kenya and the plains of the Sudan. Within these borders are included the independent Ethiopian Empire, the ex-Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland and the colonies of French and British Somaliland. This is an area of great strategic importance ; it commands the southern entrance to the Red Sea and the whole North-West of the Indian Ocean. It must necessarily have great influence upon the Arab States of the Middle East, on Egypt and on the rest of Africa. Unsettled conditions here immediately react upon the whole world, a fact abundantly proved by experience since 1935. How then can the full independence of Ethiopia be reconciled with the strategic needs of Britain and America ? How can

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the Colonial systems be adapted to give greater freedom and opportunity for advancement to the peoples concerned? How can liberty, independence and nationalism be reconciled with economic co-operation and material progress? The problems are many and varied, but there can be no clear understanding of them and no solution of them will be possible, unless the essential natural unity of the region is recognised. The political frontiers which divide it, as is so usual in Africa, are mere fictions of the map and follow no natural boundaries, no divisions between races or tribes.

The great plateaux of Ethiopia dominate the region, control its habitability by supplying nearly all its water, and contain the great majority of its people. Fertile, with abundant rainfall, rising to heights of nearly 15,000 feet, these plateaux are subdivided into many blocks, isolated from each other and from easy access to the rest of the world. This has saved them from conquest in the past and given to their inhabitants their peculiar characteristics. Unless it can now be broken down, such isolation, and the poverty and ignorance it causes, are likely to make this country a most intractable problem for the future.

The great mass of high land is divided into two by the Rift Valley which runs across the country from North-East to South-West, from the Red Sea to Lake Rudolf. The smaller south-eastern block rises steeply from the Valley floor to its mountain-tops over 11,000 feet and then, the summit passed, the land slopes gently down to the Indian Ocean some 600 miles away. It is peopled by various races, chiefly Gallas in the South-West who present a great variety of physical types and whose origin is unknown. They entered the country in the sixteenth century, some say from Central Africa, some say from the east coast. Now they are mixed with many other tribes of the region. The Amharas, the ruling race of Ethiopia,

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in whom there is a strong infusion of Semitic blood, have kept their racial identity in a great degree owing to the strong cultural tradition of the Christian Ethiopian Coptic Church. In Harrar, the largest town, are met all the races of the Arabian coast. A great walled city, it seems more oriental than African and has a long independent history. The Emirate was indeed only brought within the Ethiopian Empire by the father of the present Emperor. To the South-West lies the country of Galla-Sidamo, and it is in these hills that spring the great rivers of Somaliland, the Juba and Webi Shebeli.

To the South-East, as the land drops gradually to the sea, with no marked escarpment, so, too, gradually the rainfall dies away. Pleasant fertile hill country growing coffee, grain, cattle and all kinds of subtropical produce, is replaced by steppe, and finally by a wilderness almost indistinguishable from true desert. These barren lands are the home of the Somali, nomads ever, who respect no political boundary, and whose wanderings in search of water and feed for their beasts have been in the past a fruitful source of frontier incidents.

In this desolate forbidding land the only green thing to be found is along the few watercourses or where a passing storm has caused a quick flush of grass to grow, only to wither quickly and dry in the scorching sun. Permanent water is rare and only found in the wadis and occasional wells. Settled inhabitants there are very few, save on the banks of the two rivers, around a few oases and in the towns of the coast. On the Webi Shebeli the Italians have brought to fruition some most successful irrigation experiments on the estate of the Duke of the Abruzzi. Their work has, however, been much hampered by the lack of a good port, for Mogadishu is only an open roadstead exposed to the ocean swell. Near the mouth of the Juba is Kismayu, ceded to Italy by Britain after the last war. This could be made into quite a good port for

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medium-sized vessels, but, so far, little has been done to develop either it or the potentially rich areas of the Juba Valley and Southern Ethiopia which it could serve.

The great mass of the Ethiopian Highlands lies to the North-West of the Rift Valley, a plateau some 700 miles from North to South and over 300 miles wide, subdivided by deep canyons into a series of isolated mountain blocks. In the South, the country rises steeply from the deserts around Lake Rudolf and forms the biggest and most compact area of highland in the region. It is peopled by Gallas in the South and Centre — in the North chiefly by Amharic races, while the country below the western escarpments descending to the plains of the Sudan is but little known and is inhabited chiefly by negro tribes. Here there is much forest and the country is believed to be highly mineralised. Gold, both alluvial and reef, has been known and worked in these districts since Egyptian times, while platinum has been found more recently. This south-west block of highland country is divided from the rest by the immense trench of the Blue Nile which effectively isolates the province of Gojjam from the rest of the country. This great deep gorge forms a tremendous barrier to communications and takes a mule caravan three complete days to traverse even in the dry weather. In the rains, the Blue Nile is quite impassable and has only been bridged by the Italians at one point, a very considerable engineering feat. Smaller blocks of mountain rise to the North, each isolated by gorge and river till finally the Asmara Highlands in Eritrea are reached. This northern land has much fertile soil and abundant rainfall ; inhabited by numerous tribes, chiefly of Amharic origin, it constitutes the true home of the Ethiopian culture. Here are the sacred cities of the Coptic Church and the ruins of the old Hellenic civilisation of Axum. It is bounded on the East by the terrific Danakil escarpment and the Danakil depression, one of

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the hottest and most desolate spots on earth.

In the North of Eritrea where the coastal plain is narrow the port of Massawa, with an excellent harbour, is connected by road and rail with Asmara the capital. The only other railways in this whole region of about one million square miles, are a small line in the Webi-Shebeli area serving the irrigated settlements of Duca degli Abruzzi, and the main Jibuti-Addis Ababa line. This railway, begun in 1897, was finished in 1918. The train kilometres run, 523,499 in 1920, were 928,917 in 1929, while gross receipts of Frs. 10,587,809 in 1920 had risen to Frs. 39,224,058 in 1929. The journey from Jibuti to Addis Ababa used to take three days and sometimes up to a week if the rains had removed part of the track, though the distance is only some 500 miles. For obvious reasons little improvement has yet been possible though up-to-date information is lacking. The rolling-stock is known to be antiquated, traffic has never been heavy and in addition the port facilities at Jibuti are not adequate to deal with any great increase. It could, however, easily be made into a first-class port and has no natural difficulties which would make development unduly expensive. The climate, of course, like that of Massawa, is hot and disagreeable, but with modern conveniences and good housing much could be done to make life there quite bearable.

The Italians have constructed some good all-weather roads in the highlands, notably a good trunk road connecting Asmara with Addis Ababa and continuing past Harrar to Mogadishu — which was most useful to our troops in our conquest of the country. Other roads now connect Harrar with the British ports of Zeila and Berbera, both mere open roadsteads not easy to improve. A good road was constructed across the awful Danakil waste to the little port of Assab on the Red Sea, but these all must remain secondary exits. The main natural lines of traffic

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to the sea lie through Jibuti, Massawa and Kismayu, and of these Jibuti is by far the most important. To the West the escarpments falling to the Sudan are steep and hard to traverse. The country is mostly forested, broken and unhealthy, sparsely inhabited and but little known. Roads could certainly be made and any effective development of Western Ethiopia would necessitate their construction. But the country must first be made safe for the thorough exploration and survey which are needed, before its possibilities can be properly assessed.

Such in brief sketch is this region, the core of which is the last independent African Empire, still quite uncivilised, whose tribal chiefs, it seems, pay a rather nominal and reluctant obedience to the Emperor. His control over his people was formerly very vague and still seems somewhat uncertain. His task of establishing law and order has been made more difficult by the large quantities of arms now in the possession of his unruly subjects. There have recently been reports of fighting on the Kenya borders which involved the death of a British official, and of other even more serious disturbances amounting to civil war in the North and West. The country though rich in natural resources is quite undeveloped, the people are poor, ignorant and credulous — unhealthy and quite inadequately fed, clothed and housed. Communications are still primitive and over the vast majority of the country the mule is the essential means of transport. Doctors and education alike are almost unknown. The conditions could aptly be compared with those of Europe in the Middle Ages with the added confusion caused by recent war, conquest and sudden liberation. Britain has guaranteed its independence and has undertaken to guide and assist the Emperor in the effort he intends to make to civilise and develop his people. The task will be an easy one neither for him nor for us. What progress can be made must

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of course depend on his being able to enforce law and order and provide that fabric of good administration without which the steady advancement of his people is out of the question. It is not hard to imagine the many difficulties and dangers which will arise, particularly as the finances of Ethiopia have never been strong.

The future of the Italian Colonies, at present under British military administration, is quite unknown and unforeseeable. But His Majesty's Government have stated clearly that we wish for no territorial gains ourselves. It has, however, become quite clear that we cannot allow these territories, lying on the flank of very important lines of communication, once again to fall into hostile, or potentially hostile, hands. If we do not interest ourselves in their development and defence somebody else will.

French Somaliland, a tiny colony, dependent for its living on the trade of Ethiopia, has little commercial future apart from that country. Jibuti is the best port and the natural outlet for the great majority of Abyssinian produce to the sea. The railway is well established and the concession granted to the French Company in 1894 is very comprehensive. It is to run for 99 years and amongst other things concedes that "no other railway company shall be authorised to construct lines in competition with this Company either from the shores of the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean into Ethiopia or from Ethiopia to the White Nile". Besides this, Jibuti is of value to France as being the only port under the French flag between Marseilles and Pondicherry, Marseilles and Madagascar. It is therefore quite clear that French interests and susceptibilities will have to receive most careful consideration in any discussion of its future.

At the same time it may perhaps be hoped that the French Government after the war can be persuaded to join in schemes for the security and for the general

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development of the whole region. Without their fullest co-operation, progress will be rendered infinitely more difficult and the future of the work would be most gravely imperilled.

British Somaliland, an arid semi-desert country with scanty resources and still scantier population, has no apparent possibility of future development, save such as the Somali flocks and herds can provide — and the possible fruits of the sea. It is difficult and expensive to administer alone and would obviously benefit by inclusion in a larger Colonial grouping.

CHAPTER VII

NORTH-EAST AFRICA—WHAT COULD BE DONE

THE great problem of the whole region may perhaps be stated as being that of securing the development of all the constituent countries for the well-being of their peoples while respecting the independence of Ethiopia. The national interests and susceptibilities of the Colonial Powers must, in the present state of this jungle world, be carefully considered, but the economic significance of the political frontiers — which, as already stated, correspond to no natural boundaries whatsoever — must be ended, or no rational development of the region can be begun.

While the difficulties and dangers of making any suggestions at present are abundantly clear, discussion must start some time. A few concrete suggestions as to one way this region could be handled may therefore be made.

It must, of course, be presumed that, the war over, Italy will settle down under a form of government, we hope, democratic and willing to co-operate with us and others. The same must be assumed of France, for it is quite clear that nothing can be done without the very widest measure of international co-operation. At the same time there are definite advantages in getting as many different minds, and types of mind, to work on the world's problems as possible.

It would seem, therefore, to be not unreasonable to expect that, when peace is being negotiated, the question of returning the ex-Italian Colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland to Italy will be raised. Nor need there be any great difficulty over this. We must assume that

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methods can be devised whereby military security will be assured, so far as is humanly possible (which perhaps will not be so very far). The Colonies might be demilitarised, only a limited police force allowed, airports and seaports be undefended and open to the planes and ships of all nations. Similarly in British and French territories air traffic, as we may hope, will be unhindered by any purely nationalistic considerations. Aden, Khartoum and Nairobi will have great importance to the Ethiopian region ; these will be the airports in closest connection with Addis Ababa, Asmara and Harrar. The planes of all nations should be free to enter and leave without let or hindrance, save normal police and medical control. But, unless this region can be developed economically as a whole, on a considered plan, adequate development will be impossible. The network of communications required, to be efficient, must cross all political boundaries. It is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that some single body is needed to undertake the development of the whole area. What is required is to find a method of combining the maximum of local independence for the various Governments in all spheres of internal administration, education, medical work and so forth, with the maximum of co-operation in the economic development of the whole region. The question may be asked — Why develop a country like Abyssinia now outside the vortex of our civilisation ? Shall we not merely give them our own troubles and difficulties which at present they do not know ? Is not the native better as he is ? Nobody who has seen and lived with natives in the raw state — who has seen the misery and squalor, the ill-health and utter poverty of savage life, would ever ask the question. But it really is beside the point now. Whether we wish it or not, development of a kind will come to all parts of the world. The real problem is to ensure good and rapid development, and to make it serve the best interests both

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of the local inhabitants and of the outside world.

It may be suggested that the work should start with a comprehensive survey of the region that is to be developed. For this to be done thoroughly a team of men should be selected, some of them scientific experts and others, men with practical experience of Colonial development. They could with advantage be chosen from several nations, and men from neutral States should be amongst their number. This Commission should be required to report on the present state of the country and its potentialities. A full review would have to be made of the condition of the people and their needs, educational, nutritional and medical, as well as of the mineral, agricultural and industrial possibilities and requirements. From this report a scheme for organising the development of the region could be drawn up. This would need to be combined with information from the rest of the world as to the state of supply and demand in the various goods which the region was capable of producing. The Middle-East Supply Council furnishes us with a model of what can be accomplished in this sphere of relating demand to supply under the pressure of wartime needs. Once this survey was done, a planned system of communications could be started to suit the kind of developments that were found possible.

It seems probable that, unless the costs of motor and air transport are revolutionised by developments arising out of the war, rail communications would require suitable extension and the existing lines should be radically improved. The Addis Ababa line would probably need to be extended to the South to serve the lakes region in the Rift Valley and to the North to serve the rich plateau areas around Dessie, Lake Tsana and Gondar, while the Asmara line should be extended South at least as far as Axum.

A comprehensive system of road development should

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be worked out. Ports would need to be extended and modernised and the terminal facilities at Jibuti vastly improved. The possibilities of irrigation in the Juba Valley need to be explored, and it seems very possible that a really big scheme could be started here. In that case the port of Kismayu would have to be modernised and probably a railway would be required to the site of the irrigation works which might link up with the extension from Addis Ababa towards the lakes. In the area of the Rift Valley, the country is extremely fertile with light soil derived mostly from volcanic ash, but in parts rainfall is very erratic. Many streams and rivers fall from the escarpments on either hand and small and medium-sized irrigation schemes could easily be undertaken with little capital expenditure.

The Nile basin, of course, immediately brings up the question of Egypt and the Sudan, and it may be taken for granted that the building of dams and barrages for the control of the Blue Nile will certainly be under review at no distant date. Immense works are required and will probably need rail facilities or at least excellent all-weather motor roads fit to carry really heavy traffic. These would need large quantities of cement and the other general supplies for the big labour force involved. The Tisisat Falls just below Lake Tsana could provide electric power as required. The potential horse power is immense and might be used for the beginnings of industrial development. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility to foresee the growth of an industrial area around a developed "trading estate", where the young industries of this vast new country could be tried out, trained and controlled.

With electric power and cement modern industry can start. Many local industries are possible. Tobacco, cheap clothing, cotton manufacture, furniture, pottery, boots and shoes — all are equally necessary for countries

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starting to raise their standards of living, while with the motor roads, garages, petrol stations, repair shops, etc., are required, and the hotel industry also starts. The function of controlled development should be to provide a framework within which industry and initiative can begin to work, to provide opportunity for the African to educate himself in practical living on modern lines.

In the Somalilands there are several large irrigation works possible. The Juba and Webi-Shebeli have already been mentioned, and the Aussa Sultanate where the Awash River loses itself in a vast swamp would seem well worth closest investigation. But over the greater part of the country there is not much that development can do : more wells could be provided ; pastures might be improved and the education of the people in the care of their badly eroded lands begun. Better breeds of cattle and sheep might be produced by selection ; hides and skins might be better treated and would thereby get a better price on the market. In some of the steppe land where rainfall was sufficient, trees such as gums which stand drought might be introduced.

Despite the undoubted possibilities of mineral and industrial development, over the whole region, agriculture is now, and must long remain, the chief source of livelihood for the people. From experience in the past it would not seem advisable to lay great emphasis on any one export crop — the primary aim should be to grow a greater variety of crops for the farmer to consume himself and for local exchange within the region. Great improvements in seeds are possible and a host of small changes could be made in native systems of agriculture which would cumulatively result in a steady increase in production.

But, if the natives are to benefit permanently, the greatest care will be needed to control soil exhaustion and erosion, and for this scientific research on a great

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scale will be needed. Erosion is tremendous already. The silt-laden floods of the Blue Nile carrying annually their fertility to Egypt are but transporting there the rich soils of Abyssinia. New cultivation could easily increase this erosion to a degree which might bring disaster. The experience of Kenya Colony is witness to the danger, for there whole districts have been changed into deserts by careless cultivation and uncontrolled growth of native livestock. Any big development programme must consider the native cultures and their peculiarities. The native all over this part of Africa does not think of his livestock as commercial assets only.¹ If enduring prosperity is to come to tropical Africa the soils must be preserved at all costs. Science and native education must go hand in hand with economic development and, in particular, soil regeneration, the protection of the grass from over-grazing, and forestry work in the head-waters will be absolutely essential.

¹ *Vide* pp. 41, 42.

CHAPTER VIII

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY

BROADLY speaking, we may divide the obstacles which hinder the progress of the Colonial peoples into two main groups.

1. Those which are natural. By this I mean the difficulties which have been enumerated in the preceding pages, difficulties of poor soil, of crop disease, tsetse and locust, things which spring from the nature of the country where they live, climate and lack of easy communication with the rest of the world. The native's own ignorance, which arises partly from his isolation, his lack of capital, and the social customs and religious ideas adapted to poverty and perpetuating it, this too has already been considered.

2. There are, however, other difficulties which confront him and over which he has as little control as he has over nature, those which arise from our system of government and from our financial methods. These are man-made difficulties, made by us, not inherent in the environment, and as such deserve much more attention than they usually receive. In the past, capital for development has come either on the one hand from private enterprise — in which case it has, so far as the Colonies are concerned, in the great majority of cases gone into mining, to a lesser degree into commerce and agriculture, and not at all into the development of native resources, for that could yield no direct return ; or, on the other hand, from Government, in which case it has usually been allocated to a specific purpose, railway, road, port, etc. It has been until quite recently the declared policy of the British Government not to supply

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capital for schemes which the Colonial Government could not itself maintain out of revenue, and this has acted as a serious limiting factor in the number and kind of development schemes which could be considered for grants from Imperial funds. Many of the most valuable plans for development can of necessity show no direct revenue for long periods of time, schemes for control of erosion, forestry, etc. among them.

In the case of a country such as Abyssinia where the Government is faced with the need for constructing all the administrative buildings required by a modern State a peculiarly difficult situation arises. Schools, hospitals, offices, all are wanted. The larger towns require light and water and sanitation, not to speak of police stations, law courts, etc. While this is mostly capital non-recurring expenditure, the need is urgent, and if this construction is to be undertaken from loan funds, either it will have to be done very slowly as finance is built up to stand the burden of interest on such large non-productive expenditure or a dangerously high commitment will be made to the source from which the loans come.

But not only has capital been hard to obtain for Colonial schemes, but perhaps even more important still has been the lack of an organised, well-thought-out plan of development even of the individual Colonies let alone the Empire as a whole. There has been no organisation to plan development and to think ahead, and in fairness it should be remembered that this very idea that government should plan ahead the controlled and organised development of a country's resources is relatively a new thing. It has not yet become one of the ordinarily recognised functions of government. Hitherto each Colony has been responsible itself for initiating any works it wished to undertake — putting up good schemes for consideration and so forth, quite regardless of what other Colonies were doing, ignoring the lessons of their ex-

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perience and often duplicating each other's expenditure. Each worked in its own area, each department often in its own little water-tight compartment, without co-operation or co-ordination of the work as a whole. A letter from an expert Forest Economist tells its own tale. "Summing up my own travels and experience, the two disabilities which have struck me most are, first, the amateur character and the inadequacy of the organisation for Colonial development, including scanty and uncertain finance. As a trading unit the Colonial Empire rivals the Dominions in size and variety, yet it possesses a bare fraction of the organisation for management and development which they possess. It is impossible to believe that for a unit of this magnitude and character these things can be adequately handled by a body such as the Economic Department of the Colonial Office, formed from Civil Servants taken from its various administrative departments, and, generally speaking, lacking in the special training and experience essential for the task, however able they may be in their own spheres. The second point, the lack of a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan of development, is perhaps to be expected as a consequence of the first, and you saw that I made special reference to it in my East African report of 1937. In each successive tour that I have made — West Africa, East Africa and the West Indies — I was increasingly impressed with the indispensability to adequate Colonial economic development of a scheme of land planning which comprehends all the factors concerned. Communications, land settlement, water and soil conservation, forestry, agriculture, the cultivation of economic crops, the development of trade in these and in the various natural resources, all touch each other at some point. Detached sectional planning, subject by subject, often leads to mistakes which are difficult to rectify, and it can hardly be possible, on this system, to make a just

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allocation of expenditure. The complete map, not the section, requires to be studied. Thereafter, there is the essential need to keep these subjects out of water-tight compartments by some form of central co-ordination and control. In addition to this local planning there is equal need for comprehensive and co-ordinated regional planning, not only for the trade to distant markets but for inter-colonial trade. Not the least benefit from these measures would be the saving in duplication of work, and the pooling and therefore more widespread use of existing knowledge.

“While there has been a considerable improvement in some of these directions since the date when these views were expressed, recent experience concerned with forest and timber trade development in one of the Colonies makes me still more sure that some radical change is necessary in the present system. Under present conceptions, I feel convinced that efficient economic development cannot be achieved.”¹

But not only has co-ordination of effort been lacking, continuity has been lacking also. Surveys have been begun — and abandoned before they could possibly have borne fruit — in the interests of economy. Commissions and committees have sat long weary sessions and produced bulky and often most valuable documents — which have been promptly forgotten. “In Jamaica Lord Olivier (a lifelong and tireless worker for West Indians), sensible of the landless state of most West Indians, inaugurated an active land settlement programme. He left Jamaica in 1913 and land settlement was slowed down until, following the last riots, Sir A. Richards speeded it up again in 1938 and £800,000 has since been spent on it. Another progressive Governor of Jamaica, Sir R. E. Stubbs, helped the development of the Jamaica Co-

¹ Letter on Colonial Trade Development with special reference to Forest Products. Major F. M. Oliphant.

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operative Banana Producers Association. His successors did not, and in consequence the Association had to curtail its activities and abandon its co-operative character. In the Leeward Islands Sir W. Haynes-Smith began harbour and other developments. His successor stopped them and they have never been finished. In Trinidad Sir J. Chancellor began to drain the Caroni swamp, to convert it into fertile land and to build a new prison. A period of depression compelled suspension, but, when prosperity returned these works were not restarted. In British Honduras one Governor built a railway; another tore it up. Another, Sir J. Burdon, concentrated on waterways and built a canal. His successors have let it silt up. For years successive Governors supported alternately the rival claims of a main road to the North of the Colony and one to the West, until the Colonial Office concerned itself with those projects, had the road to the North built first and is now building the one to the West.”¹

In part this lack of continuity in the work of development has been due to the fact that it is nobody's business to organise just this work. The Civil Service is a body of very busy men. The District Commissioners have many and various calls on their time and this business of development is only one amongst many other tasks — and often the least liked because the least understood. The Civil Servant, particularly in the higher grades which stand near to the Governor and are his personal advisers, has to be very cautious in the recommendations he makes. He is an adviser and so it is his duty to exercise caution, to see all the disadvantages to a particular plan, to point out to his chief all its dangers and difficulties. Only so can he avoid the making of many mistakes which could cost a Colony dear — for the Governors are not usually technical men, or men experienced in development problems, nor are they often conversant with the particular

¹ Letter from Mr. C. W. W. Greenidge, Nov. 11, 1943.

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problems of the Colony to which they are appointed. The Civil Servant therefore acquires an essentially negative attitude to everything new ; he becomes adept at finding all the reasons why something should *not* be done. If, despite all the difficulties and dangers which have been well and truly presented to him, the Governor still insists on taking positive action — well, at least his professional advisers have done their duty and shown all the risks he was likely to incur.

Scientific research also has not been organised in any considered methodical way and much money has been wasted by duplication of effort and ignorance of what other Colonies were doing. Certain kinds of research have been conspicuously ignored and notably what is potentially the most important of all sciences for human welfare — sociology and the science of human behaviour. Much more attention should be paid both in this country and in the Colonies to acquiring a more thorough understanding of human reactions. It is untrue to say that the anthropologist wishes to keep the Colonial peoples untouched as a kind of human zoo — what he does plead for is a fuller understanding of human needs and the effects of policy on human conduct — in fact for a thorough, scientific study of human development and how it can best be achieved.

Continuity of policy, research and experiment, these are things, too, very difficult to obtain for financial reasons.

Except for moneys found from the Colonial Development Fund, and for certain direct grants to individual Colonies, most Government expenditures have been in the form of loans at a fixed rate of interest. In good years, if the money has been well spent on a scheme which quickly and steadily yields direct revenue, these loans have not proved onerous. But in the bad years when trade is poor, or if for some miscalculation the

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schemes have been unduly expensive, slow to mature, or have yielded less than estimated, the fixed interest has proved a very great burden. This has particularly been the case since 1929 when the great fall in agricultural prices has completely upset the relation between the debtor and creditor countries — the former usually agricultural, the latter the industrial States.

Money has for this reason always been notoriously hard to obtain for science and research, and for the experiment which pure science needs before it can successfully be applied to the practical problems of development. On the advent of a slump all such work has been held up, the results of years have been wasted and the staffs painfully gathered together have been discharged. The effect of such policy on the scientist has been most unhappy. He is rarely well paid and, when this extreme uncertainty of tenure is added to his difficulties, his work naturally suffers. He is usually an enthusiast and should be given the encouragement that a mind freed from material anxiety as to his future and that of his family could bring. In addition it is little encouragement to a genuine man, interested in his work, to feel that it is quite likely to be interrupted and even abandoned when a period of financial stringency intervenes. Continuity is more important in research than in any other branch of endeavour.

It may perhaps be hoped that, following the passing of the new Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, research and science in the Empire may make considerably greater progress. Under this Act provision was made for the expenditure of up to £500,000 per annum on Colonial Research, and the Colonial Research Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Hailey was established in 1942. Its first Report, published in September 1943, draws attention to the many special problems of Colonial Research and the greatly increased

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scale of effort which will be required if any adequate progress is to be made. Particular attention was drawn to the need for more technical staff especially in the poorer Colonies. The isolation and restricted opportunities of the research workers and their poor and insufficient equipment are remarked, while the need for continuity and for better organisation of the work equally are noted.

A satisfactory beginning has been made, the needs have been shown authoritatively and clearly ; it now remains to take action, and here perhaps there may be more scepticism felt. This is not the first time that excellent reports, showing urgent needs, have been framed, presented to the Colonial and other offices of Government — and had no result whatsoever. Yet if the Colonial Empire is to be developed so as to yield the high standard of living for its people, so greatly to be desired — and which is certainly quite attainable, — there is a truly immense work awaiting the scientist and research worker in all fields of endeavour. Increased development necessarily makes more acute all the old problems of soil degradation, forest depletion and so forth, and makes their solution the more urgent. New systems of agriculture need to be developed, to suit the varying needs of varying climates, soils and peoples. Crops must be developed and discovered to supply the best nutrition possible and the maximum of wealth under the natural conditions of the different countries and districts. The maximum variety is essential, so as to get variety of diet and the best possible return from each area, and to increase the possibilities of internal exchange and trade.

The increase of development will, moreover, raise a host of new problems which have hitherto received little, if any, recognition, and, in particular, the social sciences will need most careful attention, if the maximum benefit

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is to be derived from increasing the wealth at the disposal of the native population. The effect of the impact of modern civilisation on more primitive peoples and the nature and needs of civilisation itself are essential studies. The many difficulties which will be encountered can only be surmounted by gaining the full and hearty co-operation of the peoples themselves ; real progress cannot be imposed from without — it must come from within. To gain their co-operation we must have a clearer understanding of the needs, prejudices and ideas of the people most concerned, and it is through education in the widest sense of the word that stable progress can come. Education must proceed from a known foundation to meet a known need. Science alone can provide this firm foundation.

CHAPTER IX

THE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY METHOD¹

WHAT then can be done to ensure more rational and speedier development of the unused human and material resources of the Empire? Present methods and present organisations have clearly failed to deliver the goods in sufficient quantity to afford the inhabitants a reasonable and satisfactory standard of life. Something new is required. Russia has given us the example both in her homeland and in her Colonial territories of what can be achieved by the organisation of agricultural and industrial development. It is known that the work done in the Central Asian Republics in the last twenty years has been full of interest and probably holds many lessons for us. We do not, however, yet know enough about the methods employed or the results achieved to form any final judgment upon them. Soviet censorship is of the strictest and, at least in the last seven years, there has been an almost absolute ban upon foreign visitors to these areas for military reasons. The conditions too are vastly different from those found, for instance, in India. The Central Asian Republics have some 13 million inhabitants, but they are nearly as large as India with its 400 million people. Their resources until recently were quite undeveloped and indeed unknown. The problems to be encountered are obviously very different in the two cases. It would be most instructive to have full authoritative accounts of what has been achieved and of the methods used. It is understood that most remarkable material and social progress has been made, but we do not yet know clearly what resistances were met

¹ Vide *Wealth for Welfare*, H. W. Foster and E. V. Bacon. Macmillan, 1943, for full description of this method.

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from the nomad tribes or from the poor and ignorant Moslem population, who certainly had no desire that their traditional manner of life should be disturbed, nor do we know definitely how these resistances were overcome.

Certainly there is very much to learn from Russian experience, but it does seem to me to be necessary to wait for fuller information on many points which are still obscure, before it can be said how far their methods can be adapted to our own conditions and to conditions in our Empire where the problems encountered are often widely different both in degree and in kind. Meanwhile, one essential feature in their system, as I see it, is that the organisation of development is systematic, and is based on the application of capital on a very large scale to the undeveloped human and material resources, following a considered plan, which envisages not only what should be produced, but how the production might be used. It sees both the producer angle and the consumer. Now, when there is only one producer — the State — and the consumer is also the State, whose control over its subjects is complete and unquestioned, where the individual takes what is provided for him — and in comparison with what he had before, finds it good, — then the problem is comparatively a simple one. We ourselves find less difficulty in abolishing unemployment during war — when our conditions are approximately the same — than we do in peace, when the myriad wants and very varying tastes of the individual consumer must all be satisfied. We must try to organise production in such a way that the essential needs of mankind can be satisfied without sacrificing man's liberty of choice — and the freedom of our institutions. We wish to extend free institutions and to give more liberty both in this country and elsewhere in our Empire, not less.

I feel, therefore, that this business of development of resources needs a new organisation able to supplement

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the efforts of the Colonial Office as at present organised. It could take the form of an independent Board or Authority organised like any of the great Public Authorities such as the L.P.T.B. or Port of London Authority. Finance would have to be found by the British Government, and a variety of means is possible. What is most important is that the Authority should feel secure as to its finance for a long period ahead, so as to be able to inaugurate long-term plans. If funds are provided on an annual basis no such schemes are possible, no considered plans can be made. The greatest advantages would, in my view, be secured if such an Authority were given very considerable freedom for its day-to-day policy within the scope of the estimate and the financial provision authorised by Parliament. The important points are to obtain the continuity of policy lacking at present, the greatly increased scale of activity and the positive drive required for a genuine development policy, which today simply does not exist. If it is ever to exist, it must become somebody's business and be organised in a way commensurate with the very big job there is to be done.

As I conceive it this body, which might be called the Imperial Development Authority (or I.D.A. as it would surely soon become), should be able to think in terms of an annual expenditure of not less than £100 millions for the Colonies excluding Indian expenditure. This sum represents an expenditure of £1 : 10s. per head of the Colonial population, which can hardly be considered excessive when it is remembered that in this country in normal years something like £10 per head of the population is spent on capital replacements and an equivalent amount on new construction. While it may be granted that such large sums are not required for the needs of the Colonial peoples, nevertheless, if standards of living are to be raised appreciably in any reasonable period of time, expenditures must bear some relationship to the

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work it is proposed to undertake. Small sums put into too large a task are merely wasted. It has often been our habit to do too little — too late.

While the magnitude of the work involved necessitates considerable central control the many and various conditions encountered in the Colonies must demand varying methods of operation, and nothing should be done which would hinder the development of initiative and individuality, quite the contrary. But a framework of necessary services would be formed and research organised so as to serve all alike, and information would be furnished from all the world as to other people's needs and policies. The supply of capital could be arranged in many ways, depending on the state of the country and the capacity of the inhabitants. As far as possible the Authority should, I consider, not try to do work itself but should operate either by subsidiaries set up for specific purposes in the countries concerned or under contract for defined works, or through the agency of existing Departments of the Colonial Government, in order to give the inhabitants the maximum opportunity of doing the work themselves.

A few examples might make this clear. In a country like the Bukoba Province of Tanganyika, in parts of Nigeria and in Uganda, the native chiefs are highly educated, intelligent men, with native councils well able to take charge of considerable developments themselves. In these cases, where a development policy had been considered and approved by both the representatives of the Authority and the Native Government, they should be given the funds required to administer themselves according to the scheme agreed upon. It should, I think, be a part of the contract that competent technical officers were engaged for the work and these could be seconded from the permanent staff of the Authority where competent men were not locally available. But the work

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should be undertaken and accomplished by the local authorities wherever that is possible. They must be made to feel that they are responsible — it is their work — their country — their own welfare which they are forging.

In the case of a Colony such as Kenya where there are certain specific works to be undertaken, *e.g.* the Tana River development scheme, that should be the subject of a separate contract between the Authority and the Government. It could take the form of some arrangement similar to that of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate whereby the Government has built the dams and constructed major canals by means of loan funds ; the Syndicate provides machinery for cultivation and does the marketing of the crop, and the cultivator provides his labour. The crop is divided on an agreed scale. That the scheme is satisfactory to the progressive native is proven by the fact that many Africans have come from the west coast from both British and French territories to take up lands here in the Sudan, thousands of miles from their homes. In the case of an undertaking such as this the I.D.A. could build the major works and be given a proportion of the crop, while a local authority should be formed by the I.D.A. for the local administration of the scheme. This should have on its Board of Directors elected representatives of the cultivator, the Government of the Colony and the I.D.A. The remainder of the proceeds should be divided between the Government, the cultivator and the local authority as determined by this contract.

There are many items in the development of these countries which will not show any direct return, or indeed any return at all in the commercial sense of the word. Medical attention and nutrition, education, research and the publication and dissemination of information on development matters, all mean expenditure not easy to

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assess in value. These are the items which in any Colonial scheme of betterment must be carried on consistently for a long period of years before the value becomes apparent. It is just these activities which in bad times are most likely to be sacrificed by Governments in search of economies.

In general, it would of course be simplest for such work to be carried out by the Government of the Colony concerned, but just where this is most needed the country is usually too poor to undertake it on a sufficient scale. In such cases it would probably be most convenient for the Authority to act through the agency of the appropriate Departments of the Colonial Government. Estimates could be drawn up and approved in the form of a contract by the Authority to supply an agreed sum of capital annually for the cost of the policy required. In these and other instances, where works of a general character, not likely to yield a specific return, are involved, but which intimately affect the whole development of the peoples, it might be feasible to arrange that a proportion, say 10 per cent, of the increase in the general revenues of the Colony over that of an agreed base year should be paid to the Authority.

If this amounted to more than a yield of, say, 3 per cent on the capital expended it should be credited to a Sinking Fund which would eventually extinguish the debt and the account would then be closed. It is in generally increased productivity that the results of such policies will be shown, and it would seem reasonable that a proportion of general revenues might be utilised to pay for the services rendered. By this method a fixed charge for loan interest is avoided and the Authority is in effect taking an equity share in the general prosperity of the Colony.

At the end of this war the British Government will owe India very large sums of money indeed, probably at

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the least £1000 millions. This can only be paid over a long period of years and can only be paid in goods and services. In the period immediately after the war a great variety of goods will be wanted for consumption, especially as their market has suffered particularly from a plethora of money and a shortage of goods for sale during the war. But an opportunity certainly exists here to organise the repayment of the debt in those goods which will be of most use to India in building up the productivity of the country on a long-range scheme. This should involve industrial and agricultural development on a grand scale, the capital equipment for which could be supplied from this country in the form of the machinery, etc., which was required, while the expenditure internally on the installations and on general welfare would have to be organised from Indian sources, save in so far as India was willing to make use of facilities offered by the Imperial Development Authority under specific agreements.

In the same way it might be feasible to organise Regional Development Authorities which could undertake the development of North-East Africa and other similar regions. The scheme would be to form such an Authority on the directing body of which all the Governments concerned should be represented — Ethiopia, French and British Somaliland, the Sudan, Kenya and Egypt, also affected by the many questions involved in this development, together with the ex-Italian Colonies of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, with a Chairman chosen from a country quite outside the area, possibly a Russian or an American, Canadian or South African. In addition, Directors should be appointed to represent the countries which provided the finance ; their numbers and voting power would have to depend on the scale and terms under which the funds were provided. This Authority should undertake to work all railways, ports, etc., build and maintain roads and airports for the whole

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region. All irrigation and water power should come under its control. Under separate agreements with any State concerned it might undertake mineral development; the maintenance of agricultural research stations and the work of agricultural advice should be in its purview. Locust control and the requirements of forest and fishery should also receive attention.

Geological survey should also be started with a view to the discovery of minerals. Gold and other minerals are known to exist, and new deposits certainly await discovery, and an experiment might be made in this area of a partnership between the miner and the Authority. It is certain that one of the chief needs of the Ethiopian Government will be money, if the Emperor's wish to educate and provide health services for his people is to be achieved. Mining, and particularly gold mining, has in the past often materially assisted in providing quick capital to start the development of a new country. But this is only the case if the profits won in large part stay in the country. Were the gold of Ethiopia to be worked by European capital, this would not be likely, for the profits would be drained off to Europe. Yet the African alone can neither find nor develop the deposits, and the problem, therefore, is to find a way whereby this may be done for the good of all. It might be possible for the Authority's Geological Survey to prospect an area, and when small deposits of gold, whether reef or alluvial, were found these might be leased to native prospectors on a profit-sharing basis. The tools and the instruction in methods of working or, in the case of reef, the preliminary development, should be provided by the Authority, the native undertaking the work. The gold won might be divided one-third for the native, one-third for the Authority and one-third for the Ethiopian Government. As natives were trained in the work, they would be able to prospect on their own in areas set aside for their operations. By

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some such means as this, development could be ensured and the maximum profits retained for the country concerned. Careful control over gold buying would have to be exercised or there would certainly be nothing for the Government and the Authority to divide !

If large-scale deposits were found, and the results of preliminary development justified the use of considerable capital, the Authority should either set up subsidiaries to operate the deposits themselves, or could act as the agent of Government and arrange leases to reputable mining houses under carefully controlled conditions. It will be much better able to negotiate with skilled engineers, concessionaires and financiers than any Colonial or Native Government.

The scale of operations desirable for such an Authority may be estimated when it is remembered that in this North-East African region there are over 10 million people for whom provision should be made. If we think very moderately of what civilised life requires, an investment of £25 per head could not be considered excessive, and even after this was completed the country would still be poor and relatively undeveloped. But a beginning would have been made. This means an investment of £250 millions to be provided chiefly by the export of goods and services. It can only be made rapidly if carefully planned, and it can only be paid for if the production of the country is organised so as to supply those goods which will be needed by the industrial States which have made the initial investment. Loans, without organised production and exchange, can only mean default and loss. The provision of machinery could possibly be arranged by a system of long-term credits afforded to the Authority by the country where the orders were to be placed. These should be obtainable at considerably better rates than any of the individual Governments would have obtained. Capital for expenditure within the region

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where development was taking place should be provided in part by ordinary equity shares and in part by means of loans to the Authority, either by individual Governments able to provide this, by loans floated by the Authority on world markets, or by the assistance of some World Development Authority which could co-ordinate the activities of many Regional bodies.

A Regional Development Authority would get revenue in many ways. In the case of North-East Africa we may hope that a Customs Union would be arranged and the Authority could then act as Collector and be paid a proportion of the sums collected, the rest being distributed amongst the members of the Union as agreed between them. The Authority would be operating railways and ports, so the revenues of these would fall to it. The Authority would also be operating airports, and such profits as accrued from them also would provide some income. As it will be maintaining and building at least the trunk roads of the region, it should have an agreed percentage of the petrol taxation and of motor taxation. Where it operated irrigation schemes, special arrangements similar to those of Sudan Plantations Syndicate Ltd. should be arranged, and similarly with industrial trading estates. Were it feared that revenue would not be sufficient to provide for the loans, it might be possible to arrange for a percentage on the increase of revenue of each territory concerned, over that of a base year, to be allocated to a Reserve Fund, this to be used to make up any deficiency, and as a Sinking Fund. It would certainly be of the greatest assistance to these Authorities if guarantees could be arranged from, say, the British or American Government or from a World Development Authority. The whole scheme should be worked out by a preliminary Commission and submitted to the several Governments concerned in the form of an agreement or charter which should run for a definite period and be

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subject both to renewal and to revocation under arbitration.

There is no reason why such Development Authorities should not become self-supporting institutions. They should be financially sound, not charity organisations, and should not be a permanent charge on the country or countries which provide the initial finance. But return should not be looked for at once — rather we should regard them as a necessity, something which must be done — but at the same time there should be every expectation of a reasonable return on the expenditure, provided plans were adequately prepared and provided they were carried through to completion, not abandoned half-way. There will be no return either in social advance or in material profit to the inhabitants or to the Home Country unless the programme is regarded as a long-range one which will yield fruits only in the long term.

CHAPTER X

SOME OTHER SUGGESTIONS

THE idea that the machinery of Government was in need of change to undertake the new work now recognised to be its duty is no novelty. As long ago as 1918 Lord Haldane's Committee on the Machinery of Government reported that "It appears to us that adequate provision has not been made in the past for the organised acquisition of facts and information, and for the systematic application of thought, as preliminary to the settlement of policy and its subsequent administration". They went on to say: "We urge strongly (*a*) that in all Departments better provision should be made for enquiry, research and reflection before policy is defined and put into operation, (*b*) that for some purposes the necessary research and enquiry should be carried out or supervised by a Department of Government specially charged with these duties, but working in the closest collaboration with the administrative Departments concerned with its activities, (*c*) that special attention should be paid to the methods of recruiting the personnel to be employed on such work, and (*d*) that in all Departments the higher officials in charge of administration should have more time to devote to this portion of their duties".

Nothing, however, was done to implement this advice, and in no small degree the impotence and the repeated failures of Government, the frustration of the next twenty years, were due to this. Government simply was not equipped with the machinery necessary to do the work demanded of it.

Later Sir George Schuster found the same problem to be urgent, and with special reference to India makes

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the following remarks : “ What is needed therefore is to have within each department a special section charged with the function of ‘forethought’. The system should then provide that the ‘forethought section’ of each of the main economic departments should keep in close touch with each other, and in this way the ministers concerned, forming perhaps an Economic Sub-Committee of the Cabinet, would be helped to concert a properly co-ordinated policy. As a support to this organisation it is of the highest importance that the general statistical work of the Government should be extended and brought up to a high standard, while a further necessity which has recently been specially stressed by competent observers of English conditions, is for the development of a new type of civil servants who combine practical business experience with knowledge both of economic theory and methods of government administration.”¹

More recently P.E.P. have suggested and worked out in considerable detail the formation of a “ Civil General Staff ” to work as a “ planning organisation . . . to sift ideas and to convert them into coherent workable policies related to ascertained facts and trends ; to observe emergent problems before they become acute and call for immediate (and improvised) action, at a higher level to co-ordinate departmental policies and work them up into a consistent whole for the assistance of those whose responsibility it will be to take the decisions ”.² This Staff they suggest should operate as an enlarged and reinforced Cabinet Secretariat with a Central Statistical Office for fact-finding, and forethought groups of specially selected officers to do the planning and thinking ahead within each department.

More recently still it has been suggested by the

¹ *Indian and Democracy*, Schuster and Wint. Macmillan, 1941, pp. 306-307.

² A Civil General Staff. *Planning*, No. 214, p. 4, Nov. 16, 1943. P.E.P.

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Economist newspaper that an "Economic Civil Service" should be formed. Pointing out that Civil Servants today by training and experience are unfitted to deal with economic things which need practical experience "of the market-place", it suggests that a special body of such experienced men and of University experts and others should be enlisted in the service of the State to undertake its economic management and to act as professional advisers to the ministers.¹

It will be noted that all these various suggestions follow similar lines, and the remarkable degree of accord amongst the experts can surely be taken to show the absolute necessity for action. None of the suggestions are mutually exclusive — rather do they reinforce each other — nor do they exclude the possibility of an Imperial Development Authority as mentioned in the previous pages. It would certainly seem that some form of Civil General Staff is needed to serve the Cabinet in civil affairs as the Imperial General Staff does in military matters. If this is to function satisfactorily that Staff must have the fullest possible sources of information and it must have specially selected and trained administrative personnel to hand — at once, to do the preliminary fact-finding, and the thinking, and subsequently, when the Cabinet has taken the decisions, to put them into action. This is where, in the field of Imperial development, the I.D.A. could be so useful — to organise research and provide the facts, to suggest the possibilities and prepare the draft schemes and subsequently as and when these were approved to operate them.

I feel that it is of the greatest importance that the men who devise the policy should themselves put it into action. I think it would be an inestimable advantage that the men on the Board of the I.D.A. should be chosen from the Economic Civil Service. For one of the functions

¹ *Economist*, "Economic Civil Service", Oct. 23, 1943, p. 544.

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which the *Economist* foresees for them would be the direction of Companies, Boards and cartels in which the Government had an interest. But again, if the Civil Service, economic or otherwise, is to be purely advisory, no matter how it is formed or from whom it is chosen, unless it is positively charged with devising action *and acting*, it will automatically tend to develop a negative attitude, to find reasons against action, not methods whereby something positive can be achieved. It will be against taking risks — it will tend to spot the difficulties rather than stress the opportunities.

If Governments are to undertake this work of positive development of peoples and countries — and nowadays that has become a necessity — then all agree that the State must change and develop its services to meet the changes and growth in its functions. It must undertake new duties and therefore it must have new men, new ideas, new methods or it will fail. The old institutions must change with the times and we must find ways of adapting them to the new needs. No revolutions are required, but this business of positive planning of development demands three things, and provided they simply must be, somehow.

1. Forethought is needed, and the organised information on which alone this can be soundly based. Government must think ahead, not wait for desires and needs to be expressed.

2. A service organised and trained to carry out the intentions of the Government as expressed by the decisions of ministers and Parliament and which will provide the information and advice on which action can be taken.

3. Some method of ensuring the continuity of action once a scheme has been passed and work has been authorised.

As I conceive it an Imperial Development Authority

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would have a big part to play in the machinery of the State as directed to the attainment of these three major aims of modern policy.

It has been objected by those who oppose the idea of Development Boards for the Colonies and more backward countries that such bodies would imperil the freedom of the people concerned and exert a dangerous degree of control over the whole national life. In fact there is today a very real problem of how to reconcile the conflicting claims of national independence with the growing need for economic integration in larger communities, and with ever-increasing international economic dependence. This can perhaps be effected by a division of function, by giving to a new form of organisation special economic powers, while the existing machinery would be retained, as now, for all other aspects of Government Administration.

The suggestion has been made that Regional Councils shall be established at the end of the war in place of an attempt at a World League of Nations. These Councils are to exercise some authority over the National State, but as yet it has not been made quite clear what this is to be and how far it can go. It is of course at present quite impossible to attempt to forecast what kind of world may emerge from this great struggle. A tremendous disturbance of values and distortion of all stable civilised life has already taken place and seems likely to grow ever greater with increasing moral and material damage. This has so far been most severe in Europe, where an outward semblance of unity has been enforced in the interests of Germany and co-ordination of production for the sole purpose of feeding her war machine.

It is at least possible that, while it may be increasingly recognised that theoretically we ought to co-operate more for mutual benefit, in practice there may be a severe revulsion of feeling from anything savouring of a super-national State. We must not be surprised at the appear-

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ance of a violent reaction of highly nationalistic feeling and even of strong separatist tendencies within nations formerly fairly united. These tendencies will be excessively difficult to handle and for some years may endanger the success of all attempts to gain international co-operation. Yet, unless we are to sit by helpless and see new wars develop from failure to tackle potentially dangerous situations, because we do not want to seem to interfere, an attempt at securing wide measures of economic collaboration must be made.

The first few years will be years when the demands for relief and quick reconstruction will provide an opportunity to develop U.N.R.R.A. into a body known, respected and welcomed everywhere in this stricken world. From this there is at least a possibility of framing long-range measures and forming the appropriate institutions. Perhaps the Regional Authorities could thus derive and start their work in fields which had not yet come to be regarded as part of the sphere of the national Governments. Progress in co-operation might be more easy if they were to start on something new rather than attempt to supersede Governments in their recognised field of action. This business of positive, constructive development on lines guided by science at every point, in order to build up national productivity to the maximum and, by so doing, to raise everywhere the standard of living of the masses, has hardly yet been attempted — not at all on the international plane. So far as Europe is concerned this would seem to be a virgin, and possibly a most fruitful, field.

There is immense scope for effort, and gradually, as the confidence of peoples and Governments was gained, the Authorities could attempt so to guide the economics of the member States that they would become complementary to each other rather than competitive. The nature of the soil, the lie of the land, the climate and

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the mineral resources are everywhere different and this means that each country has the possibility to excel in the production of certain articles. The old Free Trade doctrine is sadly in the background today, but there is a foundation of truth within it which no nationalist considerations can destroy. We certainly can grow all the bananas and oranges we require in hot-houses in the north of Scotland — but we should all be much the poorer for so doing. Regard must be paid to the natural fitness of the countries, if the wealth of all is to be maximised. Men should be engaged in that work which will yield the greatest return to the community ; only so is true economy of labour attained.

Our aim should be to get the greatest economy everywhere — the maximum of low-cost production — and so to raise to the maximum all standards of living. “ In other words, it is production that must be planned, and international agreement is involved in this. If production is properly variegated everywhere, all producers being consumers, consumption can largely be left to itself. Some planning of consumption may be necessary, particularly in relation to primary necessities. But maximum freedom of consumers’ choice suits the British temperament best, and that, I think, is a fundamental difference between the Russian system and what we should envisage here. After all, there can be no consumption until production has taken place, and this conception of production being planned, on broad lines only, and consumption left relatively free gives the maximum play, consistent with an ordered world of efficient production, to individual enterprise and individual choice within a framework of maximised productivity.”¹

Gradually thus, as national economies become more interdependent, wars should become more difficult to prepare and a series of such Regional Development

¹ Private letter from Mr. E. V. Bacon, M.B.E.

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Authorities might have no small part to play in the attempt to increase the difficulties to the utmost. Further, the suggestion might be made that, in order to avoid the growth of large competing blocs which could become a cause of later strife, every State should be a member of at least two such Regional Groupings. Britain, by virtue of her world-wide interests and far-scattered Colonies, would probably be a member of nearly all. So would France, and Holland would be member of several. Can we not imagine Turkey as member of a Balkan grouping and also of a Middle East Region? Is it impossible to think perhaps of the Punjab as forming a member State also of the Middle East Region stretching up to and including Egypt? Perhaps the Moslems of India by taking an active share with fellow Moslem States in wide groupings outside India might come to regard the Hindu majority within India as less of a potential danger to them. Might not some of Russia's Central Asia Republics — also Moslems, now, under her new constitution — find it possible to join in such a Moslem Grouping? Similarly it would seem possible that the proposed Regional Development Authority for North-East Africa should have very great use in bringing men of its Region together by a common approach to common problems. Such a body drawing its staff from many nations, and its capital from no one source, would present far less danger to the real independence of a backward State than the tutelage, however disinterested, of any one Great Power.

Moreover, it would have strictly limited functions. The whole object of such an Authority's existence is the betterment of the peoples concerned. No education, no health policy, no sound political advancement even, will be possible until a foundation of adequate communications and adequate production of food and necessities can be laid. The best form of education is by doing the job yourself, and this is just what the Authority would

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teach the African to do. If a moment's consideration is given to the numbers of men and the vast equipment of capital goods required for developing adequately all the backward territories of the world, it will at once be realised that this can only be done by the active agency of the people themselves. The job of the white man in Africa should be to provide the brains and the capital to start the work going ; to train the teachers who can teach the African how he can win better homes, better health and better living from his land. We must first provide the skill and knowledge, the engineers, the doctors and agriculturists who can build the roads, railways, irrigation works, agricultural stations and so forth, who can advise the native what to grow, where and how to grow it. But is it too much to envisage that one of the first things which the Development Authority would need to do would be to institute technical colleges to train the mass of Africans whom it would need to carry through its undertaking? Only by the work of the skilled African can Africa be developed. Only by the work of the educated African, agriculturist and artisan, can the Continent produce the food, the clothing and the housing her people so badly need.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

It has been objected by one or two friends who have read this chapter that the relationship of I.D.A. to the whole Government machine is not clear. It would obviously have great power and influence. Who would control it and how? I am quite aware that this difficulty exists and one solution was suggested in *Wealth for Welfare*. This too, however, was necessarily incomplete as was then pointed out. This question raises the whole problem of economic power within the State and of the method of its control. As this is to be the central theme of a book I am now writing I do not feel that I can say

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any more about it at present. In this small book I have tried to sketch the manner of work, and the objectives of I.D.A. Its political implications and possibilities must await the fuller treatment which I hope shortly to complete.

CHAPTER XI

DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

It is, I think, evident that one of the major disabilities of the native peoples is their ignorance. Without knowledge they are not alive to the possibilities of their environment, or interested in the solution of the problems which confront them ; often they are hardly aware that there is a problem to be solved. Poverty, want, ill-health, starvation even, are accepted as the normal order of things ; they cannot imagine any possibility of change. Social advance is not to be hoped for without desire for change ; political freedom is no use, until men can see what they can do with it, until they have some understanding of the world around them.

But education, if it is confined to the formal school training of the young, is very slow to affect the life, the outlook and the character of the whole community. When first the compulsory and universal education of children is introduced the effects are much reduced by the home influence of uneducated parents. So slow indeed is it in producing results that probably at least three generations are needed to develop an educated community. For more rapid progress adult education also is required, as our experience in this country bears witness.

Anyone for instance who has been concerned, as instructor, with the training of our citizen army of today, can have no doubt in his mind that a very large section of our population has not yet been effectively educated after more than half a century of universal elementary education. Very many of the men have difficulty in reading anything but the simplest themes ; many can

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hardly express themselves in words ; and a very large proportion are quite incapable of any intelligible expression of their ideas in writing. Adult education is sadly needed in this country ; in India and the Colonies, if any rapid progress is to be made towards a healthier and more prosperous population, it is absolutely essential.¹

Any such adult education must, of course, be something very different from the formal teaching received by children in the elementary schools. A different technique is wanted ; and to say that adult education is needed does not in any way mean that ordinary school education for the children is not also required. On the contrary, the need for it is even enhanced by any training which the adult receives.

But the essential aim must be to arouse the interest of the whole community in themselves, in their conditions of life and in the possibilities of improvement. The whole population should move forward together. In Russia and in China the attempt has been made to eliminate illiteracy in twenty years, and very considerable advance has been made. By arousing the enthusiasm of the people it has been shown that the success of such an experiment is feasible. In our own Colonies a start has been made in the education of the children, though, so far, only a very tiny proportion has yet been affected. Even where they have been to school, the standards attained are usually far too low and the results achieved have not always been of the happiest.

Too often education has detached a boy from his community and just those who could have helped most have drifted away from their own people. This is largely because of the complete difference of atmosphere, where education even of the slightest is absent amongst the older folks. There is complete lack of mutual understanding. The need for large-scale attack on illiteracy and the

¹ *Vide* "Mass Education in African Society", Colonial No. 186, 1943, *passim*.

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general backwardness of native communities is greatly reinforced by this deplorable separation between the educated native and the uneducated of his own community.

The demand for education is growing. The understanding of what it means has been spread considerably in recent years, and has indeed often led to exaggerated hopes of what elementary schooling can give. The questions to be faced now are, not whether education shall be extended, but what kind of education can be given, how quickly and to whom? This war is certain to stimulate the demand still further and will quicken change all over the world. Echoes of the great struggle reach the most backward peoples ; none are entirely unaffected by it. The African is now serving in the Forces in India and Ceylon and will come back to his home a very changed man with an awakened intelligence. He has had army training, many have been taught to use machines, and he has seen other lands and other peoples. His interest in the world is new, everything he sees is novel. He will not be slow to impart his marvellous experiences to all who will listen — and how the African does love talking ! The returned soldier will have much to tell and not all will redound to the credit of civilised men. Here is, however, an opportunity, for, in any scheme of mass education, the very first aim must be to arouse the interest of the community and get them enthusiastic. Then, by wise guidance and leadership, formal education can be made to appear to follow their own demand for instruction. It must make response to their demand and not be something strange introduced to them from outside and forced upon them. For, if so, it will be received with the ready suspicion of backward and ignorant people and be regarded as a trap, something to be avoided — or at best just another imposition of a white man's government. Only if it is clearly something

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of use, obviously related to their daily life, can it appeal to the imagination and raise the interest necessary for the effort demanded.

An ideal opportunity for such an attempt at the mass education of a whole community exists wherever big new settlements are being planned, for example the Tana Valley Scheme in Kenya Colony. Here there is a big area of virgin land, at present almost uninhabited, which, it is believed, can be irrigated and turned into fertile populous country. A preliminary survey has suggested that there may be several hundred thousand acres of suitable land, to which water could be brought by a high-level canal ;¹ and, when this is completed, there may be further large areas, which could be utilised, in the lower Tana Valley, if the flooding and wanderings of the river could be controlled. The Government of Kenya has asked for funds to be allocated under the Colonial Development Act for preliminary survey and hydrographic investigation. When this is complete, and indeed even before then, it will probably be necessary to open Agricultural Experimental Stations so as to determine the characteristics of the soil, the kind of crops it will grow best and the correct agricultural technique to employ, in order to avoid soil alkali and soil exhaustion.

An effort might be made to form the whole scheme into a community building project on most interesting and instructive lines. If all goes well, there will eventually be formed a new colony of several tens, perhaps even hundreds, of thousands of people. It will literally start from nothing, and therefore its growth and character can be the more easily controlled. It may be suggested that the population might with advantage be built up from as wide a selection of the tribes of Kenya Colony as may be possible ; and it will probably come to include

¹ " Report of the Tana River Expedition ", 1939, D. G. Harris and H. C. Sampson.

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amongst its number many of the most alert and vigorous minds in the tribes. Such a new settlement could, with careful guidance, come to have a very great influence upon the native life of this part of Africa. It may be of some interest to consider in a little detail what might be the methods employed on such a scheme, and, if real mass education was to be one of the aims, then it should start with the work of the first survey gangs, and the Mass Education Officer should be regarded as just as necessary and important a piece of the machinery as the surveyors and hydrographers. If the aim and object is really to get the maximum benefit for the people, then his work is absolutely essential.

We may imagine the first gangs starting work in the bush, chosen, let us hope, from a variety of tribes ; for, if the recruiting is not carefully controlled, there will be no members of the more backward and conservative communities at all. The effort should certainly be made to include representatives from as great a number of tribes as possible from the very beginning, and illiterate but intelligent men chosen as far as possible. Their education in simple reading, writing and arithmetic can start immediately, and on survey work there is ample scope for showing the use of these novelties. The Education Officer and his native assistants could often be on the actual works, and the whole aim should be to explain what was being done, and why ; to elicit interest and explain the importance of the whole scheme to the natives of the Colony.

When the Agricultural Stations are opened the same technique could be followed, basing the instruction on the daily work. Here it would be even easier, for every native is a cultivator and would understand quickly the object of the experiments. Men from the various gangs could be exchanged, the work of the Agricultural Station explained to the Survey and so forth. Naturally, in all

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gangs after a few months some men would drift back to their homes — a native does not often stay long on any job. This would not be a disadvantage. Those who go home would tell their friends — naturally with considerable exaggeration and much zest — of the wonderful work he had been doing and of the wonderful new knowledge he had acquired, of course with many demonstrations thereof. Some others would have their curiosity aroused and would set off to see for themselves.

Some, however, would stay on the job and as the big, semi-permanent camps were formed at the headworks and along the main canals, they would begin to bring some of their families. These men would become the nucleus of the future settlements and the foundation stone of the whole scheme of community building. They would be the "old hands" and should certainly have badges to show their length of service and the educational standards they had attained. These are the natural leaders and teachers of the newer arrivals.

Naturally the health of the camps needs careful attention and much value can be added to the doctors' work in maintaining sanitation and cleanliness if the Educationist can enlarge upon this, and explain the reasons and importance of the precautions. Here the film and the radio can be used to supplement the book with very great effect. Mobile cinemas, wireless and libraries would now be wanted, and very cheap writing paper and envelopes specially printed for the new settlement with some striking design. The natives on the works must be encouraged to write to their friends; a fixed number of stamps each month could be provided as a perquisite, provided the native wrote the letters himself. By this means, not only would there be added encouragement to learn to write but the news would be still further spread around the countryside. Still more would want to come and see for themselves. Those who had returned to their villages

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would find themselves in demand for reading letters for the illiterate and, further, for discussing — and advertising — the works.

Good all-weather roads, and perhaps even a railway would be required for the construction of canals and barrages ; the whole great settlement must be planned, villages and townships built, fields and farms laid out. The opportunities are obvious. Native committees from amongst the " old hands " should be associated with all this part of the work and be made conversant with the needs and difficulties. Some of the men would by now have acquired considerable education and thus be able to take a most useful part in the leadership of the new communities. Schools must be built, hospitals, markets, Government buildings, community halls, cinemas and so forth. Once the interest and co-operation of the natives has been secured, the goal of forming an educated community, healthy and able to take a considerable part in the management of its own affairs, is not far away.

By this time the works will be known and discussed all over Kenya Colony, and, when the time comes to choose the settlers, it may reasonably be expected that many of those who had done the construction would want to stay on and farm the lands. Their education would continue and would enter a new stage with the application on a large scale of what had been learnt in the experimental stations. The value of the educated natives, who had been on these, is now clear ; their work would be to help the mass of newcomers. The influence of these men would be very great indeed and they should form a nucleus for the village councils and district councils which would now be needed.

So the education and value of the community would be steadily enhanced. Gradually training in practical citizenship would be spread ; the crops which are sold, and used, the local industries which could spring up and

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the relationship of the whole organisation to the world around them would become an additional object lesson in practical education. Many would have saved something from their wages ; savings banks are required and their virtues could be explained. Small Co-operative Societies are needed, and again the need for literacy and general education is obvious.

Nor would the value of such a work be confined to the members of the new community itself. It would become a focus of infection to spread the virus of education over wide areas. It does not take any great effort of imagination to picture villages and tribes whose members had been engaged on the scheme, and had prospered, themselves asking for education. Further advancement at once becomes possible.

In some villages the Educational Scheme could be centred for a period on faulty technique in agriculture which was resulting in the erosion of their lands. This could be followed by further instruction in the diet required for positive health, what to grow, and how to work the crops needed into the routine of their farming practice with benefit to them and to their land. In another area it could be centred on the forest and its value to the community. Practical bee-keeping can be taught so that it does not become necessary to burn down a tree — and sometimes many miles of forest — whenever honey is wanted. There is really no limit to the opportunity which such mass education schemes can offer. They are probably the only real solution to the problem presented by social or religious customs which result in backwardness and avoidable poverty. The problem of the redundant livestock of East Africa, essentially a social problem, if attacked in a hurry and before the natives are brought to understand the need for change, would cause resistance and might bring on revolt. If Government has to wait for the education of the young to produce

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a change, the soils will be ruined and the land a desert long before anything effective can be done. Adult education and the use of every form of propaganda, the cinema, the radio and the book and illustrated papers, may perhaps provide the solution.

Naturally, if this work is to be put into effect quickly, very considerable organisation and expenditure will be required. Films have to be made and the cinema units provided. Books suitable to such educational work, in most cases, would have to be written and specially published. The wireless programmes would be difficult and expensive to produce. The language problem alone would not be an easy one, — for instance, should instruction be in English or a native language? The native languages need adaptation to explain things and ideas novel to the native — but English would make education seem a thing outside their world. A language like Swahili could probably be adapted to the need, and new words from English could be added to its vocabulary where required.

The cost of the whole scheme would be considerable, but, where such a new community was being formed as has been suggested in the Tana Valley irrigation project, there can be no doubt that education could double its value to the native. It has often been remarked by good observers that the native acquires wealth in these canal colonies, but does not know how to use it; and it also takes many years before they acquire any community life.

As regards the cost, the experience of a mining Company in Kenya Colony is perhaps instructive. This mine draws all its labour from a distance, and it is obviously an advantage to the Company to keep those who become trained workers as long as possible. With the idea of popularising the mine and further with the far-sighted intention of making the second generation of miners

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better men than their forebears, both in physique and mentally, a considerable programme of education and betterment was undertaken. The results have been quite gratifying and some natives have stayed with the Company since its inception some ten years ago, and fifty per cent have over two years' service. The Welfare work is to a great extent managed by the native elected Welfare Committee under the chairmanship of the Compound Manager. There is now a school with both day and evening classes, three native schoolmasters and an attendance of about 150. A growing library is kept with both English and vernacular books. A Women's Welfare School to which some 80 women come regularly is a most popular part of the work. A cinema with recreational and educational films is now being installed and should prove as popular here as elsewhere. It is hoped to produce slow-motion pictures to help in vocational training as soon as material can be obtained.

It is interesting to note that, at a recent Committee Meeting, the Native Committee put it on record that they "were very pleased with the work done by the Women's Welfare Worker. The women have greatly improved in their domestic duties and general interest in their homes." It was suggested that the school should have a manual training centre attached to it with trained teachers, and "the women and children are very keen to be taught to use a sewing machine" and that a class should be formed. The suggestion has been accepted by the Company.

The educational cost per pupil with a few books and a little paper works out at about 12s. 6d. per head per annum. The cost of the Women's Welfare Centre is slightly greater, around 15s. per head. This is interesting as an indication of the probable cost of a similar educational experiment on bigger lines, if it were started without frills and with a minimum expenditure on buildings. A

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Government-sponsored scheme would need, of course, a considerable organisation, more books, paper and so forth, European instructors and inspectors, and would certainly not cost less than around £1 per head, even if undertaken on a large scale.

It would not seem feasible to extend such an adult education scheme at once to the whole native community in the Colonial Empire, — the cost would be too great. There are 60 million inhabitants of the Colonies, and, if we assume that one-half would be affected by a scheme of universal education of children and younger adults, a figure of £30 millions per annum would seem to be too great to envisage at the beginning of what really is an experiment. But, wherever new works are being built, and new communities formed, such educational schemes should be included from the very beginning and the cost should be regarded as just as necessary to the success of the whole plan as the cement which binds the dams. Such education would be in truth the cement binding the community together.

Development is admitted to be a necessity but without adequate education it could well become a curse.

CHAPTER XII

DEVELOPMENT AND OURSELVES

BUT as I see it this business of development is not only an obligation upon us, it is also of very great importance to our security and peace. Military measures alone will not suffice for security, they must be backed and reinforced by positive constructive measures of economic betterment which can provide the decent conditions of life, and hope for the future, which all men have a right to expect. It can be done. Until it is done, unsettlement will always exist — and will ever tend to spread and create the opportunity for those who make revolutions and wars. But, in addition to being necessary on humanitarian grounds, and necessary from the point of view of security and peace, development is also plain good business.

It often does not seem to be realised even by men with Colonial experience how very large is the need for investment in fixed capital in new countries, if these are to be equipped rapidly up to civilised standards. In many cases literally everything has to be provided — clothes, houses, furniture, farm implements, water supply and light in the towns, roads, public buildings, motor transport and industrial machinery. Very large areas of the world, inhabited by more than half the world's population, are almost as devoid of the equipment of civilised life as was the Middle West of the United States a hundred years ago. This cannot be provided rapidly, or all by loans; the vast majority must be furnished and paid for by the efforts, the production and the savings of the people concerned. But we must show the way and provide the initial impetus, if rapid progress is to be made.

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But it may be objected that we have so much to do in our own country, our internal commitments are so large, the losses consequent on war are so great, that finance for more vast schemes in the Colonies and in the backward areas of the world simply cannot be provided. This argument overlooks much. In particular it overlooks the lesson of this war — that with proper organisation the productive capacity of this country can be immensely increased. Given the will to organise the work, the crux of all schemes of betterment, whether at home, in the Colonies or abroad, lies in capacity to produce. *What we can do is governed by that capacity — and only by that capacity.* Nor need compulsion be employed as it must be during war. What is required is the provision of a regular stream of orders to industry to keep the wheels moving steadily, and that in turn necessitates the proper organisation of the schemes, in good time ahead of requirements.

We have a certain amount of productive capacity now earmarked for civilian needs ; and this must, of course, be considerably increased to meet the real needs of peacetime consumption. But a large proportion of our productive capacity will have to be used in capital construction in this country — new machines to replace those worn out, new roads, new schools, houses, public buildings and so forth. In addition some of our workers will not be producing, if school leaving age is raised — though this will result in the long term — other things being equal — in an increase in productive capacity due to an improvement in the worker himself.

But this country has very great productive capacity and, if unemployment can be avoided, it can be very much increased beyond anything we have known in times of peace. We can still further increase it by avoiding all inefficiency, by taking the brakes off progress and really getting to work. The brakes on progress are not

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only material, they are also moral. Men cannot work to their full capacity unless they believe their work useful, and unless they feel they have full opportunity to give the best that is in them. Men cannot work, and will not work, to the full capacity of the machine, if they feel that thereby they may do themselves or someone else out of a job. Once it is realised that we have so much work to do that we need the maximum from everybody and that unemployment has permanently become labour shortage — then one of the major barriers to industrial efficiency in this country will have disappeared. Unemployment has been in the past in many ways one of the worst curses of our civilisation, and development schemes can do very much to help in its eradication. If wisely handled and prepared on a sufficient scale they can provide a reserve of orders for just those industries, the capital goods industries, which have in the past shown the most marked tendency to slump. Where vast schemes were involved, such as the control and development of the Nile Basin, which would cost hundreds of millions and take tens of years to complete, these would have to be prepared many years ahead and put into operation by stages. They could be hurried along or slowed up as the state of employment in this country allowed. A useful rate of £100 millions per annum for Colonial Development would not be beyond our powers of production and would allow of considerable scope for increase — turning on the tap when the flow of orders to the capital goods industries for some reason showed signs of slackness.

I will venture to go further and suggest that Britain in the post-war years may not be able to afford to spend so little on Colonial Development. This war has made many changes in our economy, but one thing it has not changed is our dependence upon trade and manufacture. On the contrary this has been increased. These are small

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islands with no great resources in raw materials. We have some coal and some not very rich iron-ore. We have a fertile soil, and the climate, despite its vagaries, — or perhaps because of them, — allows of great variety in production. Its particular excellence lies in the production of milk, fruit and vegetables, the perishable goods so needed for our city-dwelling population and just those which are the most difficult and expensive to import. We have a very dense population of good and skilful workers accustomed to a comparatively high standard of living which has been founded on, and maintained by, manufacture and exchange. These people cannot be provided with food from the produce of our islands — for mere survival some fifty per cent must come from abroad. In the nature of things this has to be paid for and, in addition, the variety of raw materials needed to maintain the high standards of life by manufacturing industry must very largely be bought from other lands.

These imports have been paid for in the past (*a*) by our invisible exports, *i.e.* the income from overseas investments, the services of our great merchant fleet, the financial and other services we render in our capacity as merchants, bankers and managers, and by our entrepôt trade; (*b*) by our material, visible exports. It has recently been calculated that in the past twenty years the proportion paid for by actual material exports has steadily decreased while the invisible items have been playing a greatly increased rôle. This has been caused partly by the decay of the cotton trade and of some others of our staple exports, consequent in part on increased competition from manufacturing industry in other lands, and partly by the failure to adapt industrial production to the changing needs of the time. Into the highly contentious subject of the many causes of the general decline of our export trade it is not possible or necessary

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to enter here. Whatever the causes, the facts are not in dispute. For many years before the war our export trade had been languishing and our consequent reliance upon the invisible items to balance our accounts had steadily been increasing. Indeed we had come to be living on our capital and had actually been realising our former investments abroad in order to make our current regular payments.

Now comes this new war, and in the past five years our financial position has been completely changed. The greater proportion of our income from invisible exports has been swept away. Our shipping has been severely depleted and it is impossible now to foresee any large revenues from this source for some years to come. Our investments have almost all been sold and the proceeds spent to purchase the means of war. In addition we have contracted large debts to various Dominions, to India and to some foreign countries — not to mention our obligations under Lend-Lease — all this despite the very great generosity with which Canada and others have come to our aid. We shall end this war on balance a debtor State, not a people with immense accumulated investments overseas. It seems unlikely that for many years to come we shall be able to place any reliance upon any considerable revenues from financial and commercial services, which we shall be able to render to others. The disturbances to the direction and the technique of trade have been immense — and it is not yet possible to count on any great revival of our financial position or our entrepôt trade.

It is, I think, fair, however, to emphasise that the opportunities for revival are there. Our geographical position, on which our commerce was built, remains the same. In peace as in war we shall remain “an unsinkable aircraft carrier moored alongside Europe” — which surely means something in the years to come. Our posi-

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tion in the maritime trade of Europe also could even be enhanced by the aftermath of this terrible war — always provided we take the opportunities which are before us.

But these are possibilities only, and for the present we must reckon that, if we are to continue to pay for our regular requirements from abroad, we must find markets for a great increase in our export goods. A recent booklet states that these will need to rise from £300 millions to £600 millions per annum if we are to have the means to pay for imports on the same scale as heretofore and without making any allowance for any rise in the price of raw materials relatively to manufactured goods.¹ Further, it must not be forgotten that the whole trend of modern social policy — and this trend is likely to be further reinforced after the war — is to transfer purchasing power from the richer to the poorer sections of the community. Social services, pensions, regular employment and high taxation all work in the same direction. As a result it can be expected that a larger percentage of the national income will be spent on food and the cheaper “necessities”, clothing and so forth, and a lesser proportion on luxury goods. This may be expected to increase still further our demand for imports, for “while it might also mean a check on certain luxury consumption by the wealthier classes, luxury imports were in any case small, so that there is no reason to assume that the decline in the spontaneous demand for luxury imports could even approximately offset the inevitable rise in the spontaneous demand for imported foodstuffs and textile fibres.

“Anyone, therefore, who envisages a post-war Britain with fuller employment and fairer internal distribution, must also envisage that the spontaneous demand for imports arising in such a condition will be considerably

¹ *Export Policy and Full Employment*, E. F. Schumacher. Fabian Publications Ltd. and Victor Gollancz Ltd., Nov. 1943.

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larger than it has been during the years 1936-38.”¹

The question may well be asked whether it will in fact be feasible to increase our exports to the extent necessary, in a world impoverished by war. Certainly it would seem safe to say that no action along the traditional lines can be expected alone to provide a full and sufficient solution to the problem. This seems plain common sense — and is the conclusion also reached by the expert economists from their technical considerations. If we had difficulty in keeping up our export trade before the war we can hardly expect suddenly to double it at the end. Some of our best customers will be greatly impoverished. Competition from the United States and from the Dominions and India in our staple lines can be expected to be even fiercer than before. True, we shall, at any rate, have less competition for a time from Europe and Japan. But it should not be part of long-term policy to aim at the permanent impoverishment even of the enemy countries. Their production of goods will have to be controlled to prevent the renewed making of armaments — a difficult task in itself; for with the march of science and invention what is vital to the war machine today, tomorrow may be of quite minor importance; while what is today a child's toy may tomorrow become a weapon of tremendous destructive power. But if ever their peoples are to be educated to see the folly of war, it can only be by a dual policy — both of making war itself and its consequences extremely unpleasant to them, and its future preparation difficult, and at the same time of making the continuance of peace seem positively attractive. For the future maintenance of peace the attainment of higher standards of living is necessary in the enemy countries as well as in those of our friends.

It may be asked whether we may not hope to attract more trade by greater general efficiency and reduction

¹ *Export Policy and Full Employment*, p. 7.

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in the price of our goods. These will help, but will not solve the problem. Greater efficiency, while desirable in all countries and not least in that it will mean a better use of men and materials and so enable a high rate of real wages to be paid, cannot be expected to produce such a differential between us and our competitors as to enable us to double our exports ; while lower prices, unless counterbalanced by a considerably increased volume, tend to produce less not more income. Such methods as subsidies, exchange manipulation and so forth, while affording assistance, at any rate for a time, are liable to provoke retaliation and all the familiar symptoms of the Trade Wars of the last twenty years.

It would seem that one of the few measures which could be expected to bring really large-scale benefit would be the development of new markets amongst the poorer populations of our Empire and of other backward areas of the world. The Colonies can and do provide us with very many of the foodstuffs and raw materials we require. Their contribution can certainly be very greatly increased. Proper organisation of their development could be used to supplement our efforts to increase our export trade in other directions at the same time. It is abundantly clear that we cannot solve our problems without creating new markets, nor without these markets can these people themselves rise in the scale of civilisation.

Everything which is done to help the development of the backward peoples helps us too. The educational programmes would cost money — but it should not be forgotten that a large part of this cost, perhaps the major part, is in books, paper, films, radio, etc., most of which will have to be produced in this country. Thus direct help is afforded to certain export trades as well as the indirect help afforded by the general rise in productivity which would result.

So far as India is concerned the problem of increasing

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our mutual trade — quite apart from any political considerations — falls into two quite separate sections. We shall have, first of all, to consider the payment of the debts we owe, no small matter, for as has already been stated, we shall owe India in the region of £1000 millions before the end of this war. The Indian market will be starved for consumers' goods and for a time, as elsewhere, we shall find no difficulty in selling such goods as we may have for sale. The difficulty will be to apportion scarce stocks fairly to the point of greatest need. Europe will surely have a high priority in the matter of need. The effort should certainly be made to see that at least a big proportion of the goods we send in payment for this debt should take the form of capital goods which will be of permanent value in building up the prosperity of India. But such exports will not themselves produce the imports we require, they are a net payment. This brings out the second part of our problem. We wish to increase our purchases of India's goods, her foodstuffs, her raw materials and semi-manufactures — and that is why we wish to sell to her. But the Indian peasant needs more food himself first and, if there is to be, at the same time, more to consume for the people now alive, still more for the increase in India's population which can be anticipated, and still more to increase her exports, then the need for a great and general increase in productivity becomes clear. It also becomes clear that, in this matter of helping India, we shall also be helping ourselves. Not until the land produces much more will the peasant be able to live better himself and also have more for sale.

So with our Colonies we must especially look to the long-range development of their total productivity, not only as the source of our raw materials and our foodstuffs, but most particularly as the only solution for their poverty. But this fact, that we need to find markets for

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our goods, does not mean that we are, therefore, in a weak trading position ; quite the contrary ; we are in a position of tremendous strength. We are the one great market ever open to buy — and with goods to sell. This position must not be used unscrupulously to exploit our customers, but rather to gain their lasting and strong good will. In the long run we shall gain, in so far as, and only in so far as, our interests become theirs also. We wish to buy — we have goods for sale. We must see that these goods are available at the right price, are of sound quality, suited to their needs. We must see to it that fair prices are paid to them for their products. We must offer all the help and guidance we can. Only in their prosperity can we find wealth and safety. We must study their needs, the special requirements of each country. We must be ready to try novel ideas and new methods to meet this new situation which has arisen. But there is no reason to fear the future if we do but keep the well-being of our customers in the forefront of our plans.

CHAPTER XIII

LAST THOUGHTS

No, it is not beyond our powers to organise such development as has been described, nor is it beyond our powers of production to pay for such a programme. On the contrary this sum of £100 millions mentioned could with advantage to ourselves be regarded as the absolute and irreducible minimum below which our annual capital expenditure on Colonial development must never be allowed to fall. This would allow for further expenditure as decided on educational and other programmes which the development works themselves make necessary. It would give employment at home and great benefit abroad ; it would help our export problem and would also give direct and interesting work to very many of our people. Think of what full development of the lands and peoples of our Empire means in terms of men and women working in the field. We need the scientists on whose studies work must be based ; geographers, geologists, the anthropologists and the agricultural scientists, the chemists who can find new uses for raw materials. We need the surveyors, the engineers and the prospectors to draw the maps, to plan the railways and roads and the drainage and irrigation works required, to find the mines and bring their produce to our service. We need the doctors, the nurses to show the peoples how to avoid and how to cure disease and to point the way to cleaner, healthier lives. We need the skilled agriculturist to show the farmer how to grow more and better crops and beasts, how to get a better living from his land, and how to maintain and to increase its productive power. We need the industrialist and the artisan to start the new industries

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and to train the native in the ways of the machine. We need the teacher, and the elementary schools, the secondary schools and the universities to give them fuller understanding of themselves and of the opportunities around them.

Here is work which could appeal to the best in our people and to their genius for team-work. In particular the men and women in the Forces whose qualities of leadership have been developed by the needs of war might find interesting and novel work.

It is an immense and inspiring opportunity, nor is it in any way an opportunity which is ours alone, for this work should not stop at Africa — all over the world there is poverty which could be remedied by the production of the goods the peoples need. Countless millions in the East live always on the border-line of want, ever threatened by famine, flood and pestilence. In Europe too a third of the population lives little better than the natives of Africa ; the average income of a Spanish peasant or a Yugoslav, a Pole, or a Rumanian, is less than that of a moderately prosperous native cotton-grower in Uganda.

To a very large degree this is an American opportunity. After this war Russia will be faced with very great tasks in the rebuilding of her devastated areas and in the development of her great territories and their unused resources. It is almost unthinkable that she should become an exporter of capital or machinery in any period of time that can now be foreseen. Britain also has immense work to do in her Colonial Empire and India, as has already been shown. But this work should not be undertaken in any exclusive spirit ; if America, if the Dominions wish to help — if they can spare men, machinery and ideas to help the work along, there is work enough in the world for all to share. The Dominions, partly by natural processes of development and partly

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under the pressure of war, have become industrialised nations of very great importance. Their productivity, both in industry and in agriculture, is high in total, and also high for the number of workers engaged. They have it in their power to make an immense contribution towards the development of the rest of the Empire.

But in addition American and Dominion motor cars, farm implements, mining machinery and electric-light plant, etc., are peculiarly suited to the requirements of new countries. They were originally designed and built for the frontier, and the conditions of the Middle West, Australia and Canada, so far as concerns the demands made on the machine, are very similar to the conditions of Africa. The American motor car with its bigger engine and high clearance is more suited to African roads than the English car, which has in addition a much more rigid chassis. The old Ford model T is still remembered with affection by many as the finest pioneer car they have ever owned. The majority of the machinery in common use in the Colonies today is of American or Dominion origin.

This then is the American opportunity. But it must be remembered that, unlike the case of the Middle West in the nineteenth century, the people as well as the country have to be developed. This is a potential market which can be made actual. But these people, these potential customers, have no money with which to buy. First they must be taught to produce something themselves. They must be given first the health, the food, the education which they so badly need. Then with greater energy, health and knowledge their wants grow rapidly, as has already been seen in many parts of the world where sound development policy has been put into action. There is abundant hope that American generosity also will not be backward. The Missions, hospitals and schools she has so freely given to the world

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in the past make us feel sure that in the future she will add still more to her "reservoir of good will." But imagination, patience and capital will be wanted. Poverty *can* be remedied. These ever-expanding markets *can* be organised, but the work will need a conscious effort of constructive development admirably suited to the practical idealism of the American people.

But primarily this is Britain's task and opportunity ; opportunity, because the plain reality of our economic situation is this. We ask the world a simple question, "We want to buy — have you anything for sale?" The imports are what we want, exports are primarily to pay for them. Surely the ways can be found, and with less difficulty than if we wished to sell but were reluctant to buy. I confess I have little patience with the Jeremiahs who speak of ruin, of our time of greatness gone, and of the poverty and weakness which must now be our lot. The "old firm" had grown slack, perhaps, and had relied too long on its early successes. It has been obliged to wake up and fight for very life, and has passed through the most awful dangers of its whole existence. *But it has won.* Is this the time to moan about the future and to bleat of ruin? This is a time for hope. The blood and tears are nearly past — now is the time to renew our lives in greater happiness — the time to rebuild a better world. Why should we fear? The foundations of our strength, our people and their skill, their honest will to work, are still the same. Our power to produce has never been greater ; never greater the respect in which we are held abroad. What we need now, most of all, is right leadership and the right organisation to make full use of the opportunities which lie ahead.

In the Colonial Empire Britain alone can show the way. On us lies the responsibility. Those who criticise, and often rightly so, the neglect of the past should now be the first to help this work forward and demand that

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a start be made in its preparation. In the past Britain has led the world by the enterprise of her citizens and the initiative they displayed — by the brilliance of her scientists and the novelty of their ideas.

There is still scope for novelty and need for new ideas. The world has never had greater need of leadership than now, never have we had greater opportunities or brighter prospects. In the past our forefathers found prosperity through leadership, through work well done ; let us go forward boldly once again and lead the world to prosperity and peace.

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